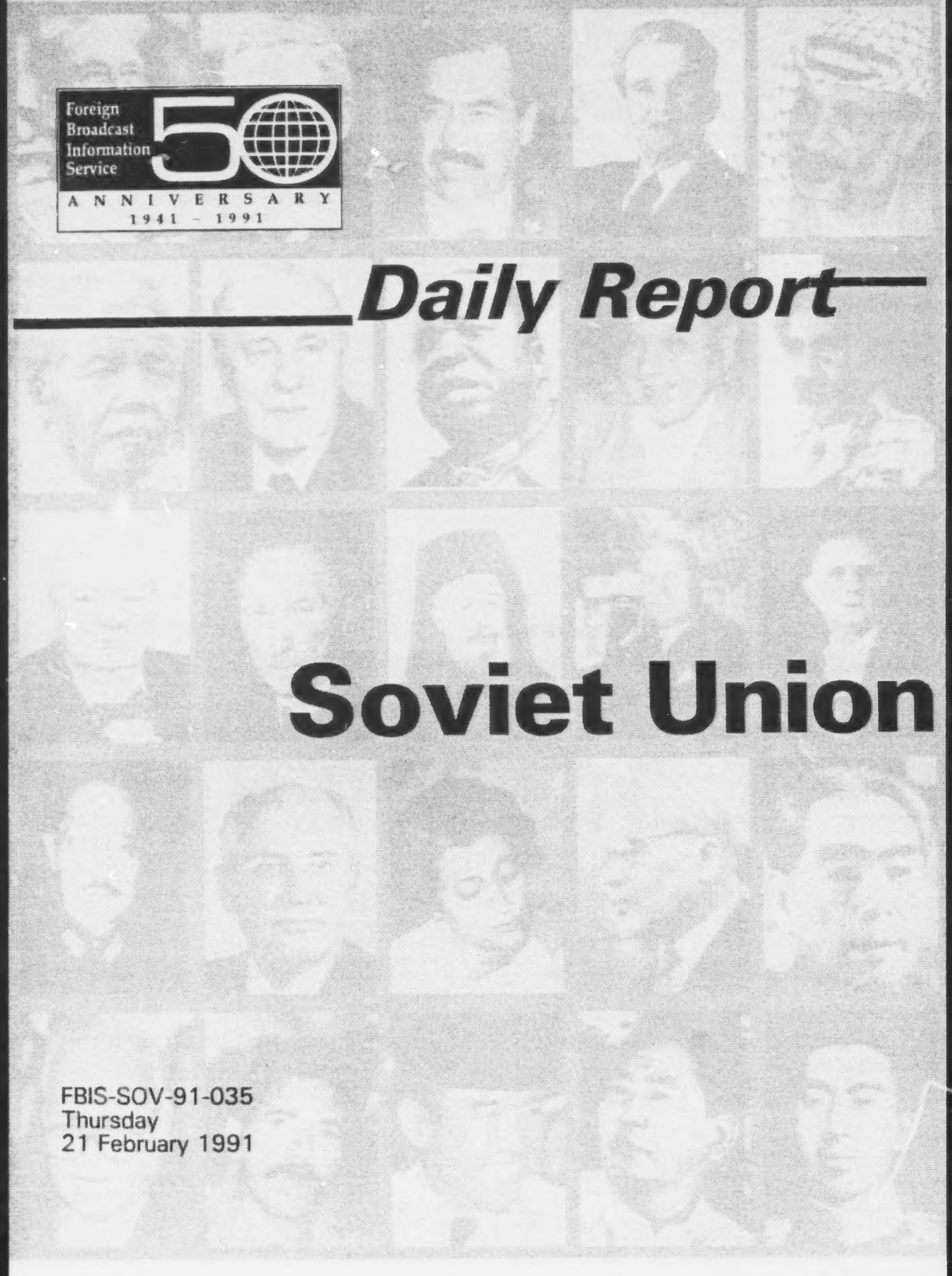

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Churkin Holds Briefing on Gulf, Other Issues

Cautions Against Optimism

LD2002143591 Moscow World Service in English 1400 GMT 20 Feb 90

[Text] The Soviet Union is awaiting a precise and positive Iraqi response to President Gorbachev's peace initiative, a spokesman said on Wednesday. Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaliy Churkin told a briefing that Iraq's acceptance would bring us closer to peace and an end to the bloodshed.

The spokesman also said Soviet officials were not surprised by the delay in replying but they would like a response as soon as possible. He said the Iraqi foreign minister did not need to come to Moscow himself to deliver a reply, adding that Iraq could send its reply through other channels. Talking to reporters after the briefing, the Soviet spokesman cautioned that one should not be too optimistic because it is a very complicated situation, but he added that he expected a clear reply from baghdad soon. Throughout the last week, while the coalition had made final preparations for a land assault, the Soviet Union has expressed cautious optimism about prospects for a settlement.

Bush Reply Not Rejection

LD2002144591 Moscow TASS in English 1431 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondents Aleksandr Kanishchev and Igor Peskov]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—"We do not consider President George Bush's reply as a rejection of the Gorbachev plan," Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaliy Churkin told a briefing here today.

Churkin was commenting on President Bush's Tuesday statement that the plan for a Gulf settlement contradicted U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The spokesman said the U.S. President's statement was a usual exchange of opinions "between the Soviet and U.S. leadership, which is "sometimes held publicly".

Churkin said Moscow has received a written reply from the U.S. President "outlining some considerations" of the Soviet president's message putting forward the Gorbachev plan and describing the results of talks with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz in Moscow.

On Tuesday night, Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh had a telephone talk with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. They discussed "efforts outlined in Gorbachev's plan", Churkin said.

"The sides are continuing to exchange opinions," Churkin said.

'No Information' on 'Aziz Visit

LD2002153391 Moscow TASS in English 1508 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondents Aleksandr Kanishchev and Igor Peskov]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaliy Churkin today could neither confirm nor deny the possibility of Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz's return to Moscow to convey the Iraqi reply to President Mikhail Gorbachev's plan for a Gulf settlement.

Addressing a briefing here today, Churkin said he had "no information about whether or not 'Aziz will arrive in Moscow" in the coming hours.

Churkin noted that "we do not proceed from the notion that such a visit should occur without fail". But he said other forms of communications could be used, including via embassies.

At the same time, Churkin said that "if the Iraqi side decides that the best form to convey its answer to Moscow is a visit to Moscow by the Iraqi president's envoy, such a possibility cannot be excluded".

Asked when the Soviet side expects an answer from the Iraqi leadership, Churkin said "the sooner, the better". He noted that Moscow expects a "clear and positive answer" to Gorbachev's plan. "The answer will show where we are from the point of view of implementing the plan and settling the Gulf crisis," Churkin said.

Reviews Status of Peace Plan

LD2002164391 Moscow TASS in English 1610 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondents Aleksandr Kanischev and Igor Peskov]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh will take part in a special session of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, scheduled for Thursday in Madrid. The session will be attended by representatives of countries which are not members of that organisation, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaliy Churkin told a briefing here today.

He also announced that British Prime Minister John Major will pay a brief working visit to Moscow on April 5.

Churkin then said that during the regular meeting of a standing working group on a peace treaty between the Soviet Union and Japan "coincidence or rapprochement on a number of points was noticed."

"The discussion was recognised useful and meaningful by both sides and the group agreed to continue joint work," Churkin said. He added that the heads of the

delegations exchanged views on Soviet-Japanese relations in light of preparations for President Mikhail Gorbachev's forthcoming visit to Tokyo in April.

Before responding to numerous questions concerning efforts to settle the Gulf conflict, Churkin stressed the importance of acceptance by Iraq of the Gorbachev plan. "A quick reply from Iraq would create a new situation," Churkin said, "which would bring the sides closer to the realisation of the U.N. mandate."

He neither confirmed nor rejected rumours that Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz was expected to return to Moscow with a reply to the Gorbachev proposal.

"I don't yet have any information concerning the intention by Tariq 'Aziz or any other Iraqi official to arrive in Moscow in the next few days," Churkin said. He then told journalists not to fully rule out such a possibility.

Commenting on the first reaction to the Gorbachev plan in the United States, Churkin said: "We did not view President Bush's remark reported by news agency yesterday as a rejection of the Gorbachev plan. He added that throughout the Gulf crisis, Moscow and Washington have kept exchanging views relating to possible ways out of the situation, mainly through diplomatic channels but also through public statements or pronouncements."

"Such an exchange of views is now going on in connection with the Gorbachev plan, the main parameters of which were not unexpected by the U.S. Administration," Churkin stressed.

The Gorbachev plan is aimed at finding the shortest path to peace and implementing the U.N. Security Council resolutions while avoiding further and perhaps even greater bloodshed, Churkin said.

"The main thing at present is to get a reply from Iraq. We are confident that Iraq's clear-cut positive response to the Gorbachev plan would create a news situation, which would bring the sides closer to the realisation of the U.N. mandate," the Soviet spokesman said.

"This reply will show where we are from the point of view of the fulfilment of this plan and an end to the bloodshed in the Gulf."

Churkin called groundless any hopes for the collapse of the coalition which took shape in protest against Iraq's aggression and during the voting on U.N. Security Council resolutions.

"The coalition remains unified and will reach the set objective—the liberation of Kuwait," Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaliy Churkin said.

Raps Canadian Position on Baltics

LD2002163791 Moscow TASS in English 1615 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondents Aleksandr Kanishchev and Igor Peskov]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—A Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman said the Canadian Government's position was contradictory because, on the one hand, it wants to strengthen its own federation and, on the other, takes actions aimed at encouraging the division of the Soviet Union in connection with events in the Baltics.

In reply to a TASS question, Vitaliy Churkin said that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's recent speeches and the official Canadian reaction to the poll of the population in Lithuania provided proof. "One is led to believe that Ottawa applies a double standard to the problems of multinational federation: one standard applies for the preservation of its own federation and another for our similar problems."

Churkin said it was "undisguised interference in the internal affairs of the USSR" that officials of the Canadian Embassy in Moscow took part in monitoring the public poll in Lithuania.

In this connection, Churkin said the Soviet side has several questions: What are Canadian diplomats doing in the Soviet Union and who and on what grounds was engaged in the so-called monitoring in Lithuania.

He also stressed that the USSR "reserves the right to pose these questions before the Canadian side."

Says Canada Using 'Double Standards'

LD2102090991 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0730 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] A briefing on current matters of international policy has been held in Moscow. Churkin, chief of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs Information Directorate, said in particular:

[Begin Churkin recording] The course the Canadian Government has taken lately has become increasingly contradictory. On the one hand, aimed at strengthening its own federation, and on the other, at encouraging in practical terms the split of the Soviet Union with respect to the situation in the Baltic region.

Recent speeches by Prime Minister Mulroney, and the official Canadian reaction to the poll of the population carried out in Lithuania is clear testimony to this.

The impression is being created that Ottawa is applying double standards in approaching problems of multinational federations; the first with regard to preservation of its own federation, and the other when it is a matter of our problems of a similar order. In the last instance, what is at issue is that it is difficult to assess other than as blatant interference in the internal affairs of the USSR, right up to some kind of involvement of staffers of the Canadian Embassy in Moscow in "observing"—in quotations—the holding of a poll of the Lithuanian population.

Apropos, in this respect the question arises: What are the Canadian diplomats involved in here? Of them, who and

on what basis has been carrying out observation in Lithuania? We reserve for ourselves the right to place these questions before the Canadian side. [end recording]

Calls 'Team Spirit' 'Obstacle' in Korea

LD2002172891 Moscow TASS in English 1707 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondents Aleksandr Kanishev and Igor Peskov]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—The Soviet Union bases itself on the fact that the dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea is an effective means of improving the situation in the Korean peninsula, that it lays the groundwork for trust and understanding between the sides and helps solve the old Korean problem. This statement was made at a briefing today by Foreign Minstry spokesman Vitaliy Churkin.

Churkin commented on the recent decision of the DPRK to unilaterally terminate dialogue with the Republic of Korea at the level of prime ministers, in connection with the regular U.S.-South Korean manoeuvres "Team Spirit 91." The Soviet side, he said, believes that "it is necessary to refrain from any actions that hamper relations between Pyongyang and Seoul and continued intra-Korean contacts, that create additional obstacles to the dialogue."

"It is obvious that one such artificial obstacle is the current military exercise Team Spirit. The Soviet Union has long urged the U.S. and South Korea to reconsider their attitude to it."

Churkin expressed hope that in the final analysis common sense and good will of the Korean sides will lead to the earliest resumption of dialogue at all levels. This would meet the interests of the Korean people, and of stronger peace and security in the peninsula and the Asia-Pacific region.

Northeast Asia

Reports Continue on Planned Gorbachev Trip to Japan

Japanese Paper's Report Cited

LD1602103891 Moscow TASS in English 0939 GMT 16 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Vladimir Kuchko]

[Text] Tokyo February 16 TASS—"Preparations for President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Japan are conducted in accordance with the developed programme, to which new substance is being added now. There is not any question about the postponement of the visit," a Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman told TASS, which asked him to comment on the article by former Japanese Ambassador to Germany Akira Sono published in the newspaper SANKEI SHIMBUN on Friday.

The ex-diplomat, who regularly contributes his articles to the newspaper's rubrick "The Right Viewpoint", argued, in part, that the forthcoming visit was "a link in the Soviet Union's subversive diplomacy" and called for postponing it "for some time".

The spokesman said such statements had nothing in common with the Japanese Foreign Ministry's stance on this issue: In his view, this publication does not deserve attention because it reflects the subjective view. The Japanese Foreign Ministry also does not share Sono's contention that envoys of the Soviet president, visiting Japan, are "saboteurs" who exert influence on mass media, political leaders and the public.

Delegation to Japan Takes Shape

OW1602131791 Tokyo MAINICHI SHIMBUN in Japanese 15 Feb 91 Evening Edition p 1

[By correspondent Kenichi Kono]

[Text] Moscow, 15 Feb—According a well-placed source in Moscow, the Soviet Union plans to organize a large-scale entourage to accompany President Gorbachev on his visit to Japan in April. Volskiy, chairman of the Union of Science and Industry, and Malkevich, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry have been tentatively placed in charge of economic affairs in the entourage. Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh will take charge of political affairs, replacing former Presidential Council member Yakovlev. The Soviet foreign minister will visit Japan next month for final working talks with the Japanese side on preparations for the president's visit to Japan.

Volskiy assumed the chairmanship of the Union of Science and Industry, founded last June as a Soviet version of "Keidanren" [the Japanese Federation of Economic Orgainzations], after serving as "the Kremlin governor general" of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast when the oblast was placed under the direct rule of the central government following ethnic clashes. He is known to enjoy the trust of President Gorbachev.

Malkevich became the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry after serving as vice minister in the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations. He led the Soviet delegation to a joint Japan-Soviet economic committee meeting held in late January this year.

Last year, the Soviets set up a working group in preparation for President Gorbachev's visit to Japan; the group was led by Yakovlev, a member of the defunct Presidential Council. Yakovlev was in charge of dealing with political issues like the territories question and the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan. He retired from politics following the abolition of the Presidential Council under reform of the political structure. He is expected to return to an academic life at the head of a research institute.

Vice President Yanayev succeeded Yakovlev as head of the working group; the vice president will not accompany the president, remaining behind in Moscow. Therefore, Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh will take charge of political affairs to be discussed with the Japanese side.

Shatalin, former member of the defunct Presidential Council, and Petrakov, former presidential aide, were in charge of handling economic affairs with Japan. The two left the Gorbachev government to protest the scrapping of (the 500-day plan), calling for radical economic reform and protesting the military crackdown on Baltic independence movements.

Far East Locals Oppose Giving Kurils to Japan

LD1402101191 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 2200 GMT 13 Feb 91

[Text] Far East inhabitants have spoken out against handing over the four islands of the Kuril chain to Japan. This is shown by the results of a public opinion poll conducted by staff members of the local Orient Scientific Information Center. Altogether, some 1,500 inhabitants of Sakhalin Maritime Kray and Khabarovsk Kray were polled, and only a handful spoke out for handing over the islands to Japan.

Good Bilateral Ties With DPRK, ROK Sought

PM1902092791 Moscow TRUD in Russian 15 Feb 91 p 3

[Interview with USSR Deputy Foreign Minister I. Rogachev by correspondent Ye. Zhurabayev; place and date not given: "Two States on One Peninsula"]

[Text] Our correspondent Ye. Zhurabayev has interviewed USSR Deputy Foreign Minister I. Rogachev on our country's relations with South Korea and the DPRK.

[Zhurabayev] Igor Alekseyevich, what are the prospects for ties, economic ties above all, with South Korea?

[Rogachev] Soviet-South Korean relations are still quite young: Direct trade, economic, and other contacts of a nongovernmental nature between the USSR and the ROK were started up at the end of 1988, and diplomatic relations were established last September. The change in our approach to South Korea—I would like to single this out—was a practical result of implementing the policy of new thinking.

Despite such a brief period, Soviet-South Korean relations have been marked by a number of important events. Two top-level meetings have been held, and the foreign ministers have met twice. During ROK President No Tae-u's visit to the USSR in the middle of last December a declaration on the general principles of USSR-ROK relations was signed and a number of intergovernmental agreements in the trade and economic sphere were concluded. During my recent trip to Seoul as a special representative of the USSR President I had foreign policy consultations at the ROK Foreign Ministry in addition to meetings with the ROK leadership. In short, a good start has been made and a fast pace built up, particularly if you bear in mind that only six months to a year ago interstate relations were practically "at zero." This is accounted for, above all, by the two sides' great interest in cooperation in various spheres.

One promising area here is trade and economic ties. Commodity turnover is growing rapidly: In 1988 it totaled $290 million, the next year $600 million, and in 1990, according to estimates, it exceeded $1 billion. Thus, the volume of trade has practically doubled annually.

A broad exchange of opinions on questions of expanding mutual trade, investment and scientific-technical cooperation, and cooperation in the spheres of fishing and exploitation of minerals took place during the recent visit of USSR Deputy Prime Minister Yu.D. Maslyukov to Seoul. An accord was reached that the ROK will provide our country with commodity, investment, and bank credits worth a total of $3 billion over the next three years. It was agreed to conduct a joint on-the-spot study of the possibilities of implementing seven projects to open up the natural resources of Siberia and the Far East, including Sakhalin's oil and gas deposits. Projects to introduce advanced Soviet technologies into South Korean industry were also discussed, as well as joint research in the sphere of nuclear energy. It is intended to sign an intergovernmental agreement on air communication in the very near future.

As we see, the plans are very extensive on both sides. The task now is to embody them in real deeds as quickly and effectively as possible.

[Zhurabayev] How has the activation of our contacts with South Korea affected the USSR's relations with the DPRK?

[Rogachev] I wish to stipulate at once that the course we have taken of gradual normalization of relations with South Korea came as a surprise to no one. We discussed questions connected with this in advance with DPRK representatives both in Moscow and in Pyongyang. In particular, we explained our position in a frank and comradely manner last September during the USSR foreign minister's visit to the DPRK. I will state frankly that we would like to count on greater DPRK understanding of our policy with regard to South Korea. We believe that there are no grounds for dramatizing the situation.

Long-standing bonds of friendship and cooperation exist between the Soviet and Korean peoples and between the USSR and the DPRK. We for our part wish not only to preserve but also to augment our ties with the DPRK and to make them still more fruitful and in keeping with the spirit of the times. We believe that all the necessary possibilities and preconditions for this exist, and we see no objective factors that hinder it. The Soviet leadership's desire to strengthen friendly relations with the DPRK was confirmed in M.S. Gorbachev's message to Kim Il-song, general secretary of the WPK [Workers Party of Korea] Central Committee and president of the DPRK, which our new ambassador to Pyongyang handed over recently.

I want to emphasize that we have agreed with the ROK to build bilateral relations in such a way that this is not detrimental to the two states' relations with third countries, particularly with the DPRK. This important condition is juridically enshrined in the joint communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations and in the aforementioned Soviet-South Korean declaration.

[Zhurabayev] Korea remains the only divided state. What can you say about the future of inter-Korean relations?

[Rogachev] Indeed, the split in a once united country has now persisted for more than four decades. As the Koreans rightly say, this is an open wound in the heart of the Korean people.

The desire for unification among Koreans in North and South is great and does not lessen with the years. We wholeheartedly support the Korean sides' efforts aimed at reducing military-political confrontation, ending the arms race in Korea, and creating an atmosphere of North-South trust.

People in the Soviet Union observe with interest the situation on the Korean peninsula—a region directly adjacent to the Soviet Far East. Some reassuring positive changes have been noted there recently. I mean, above all, the continuing inter-Korean dialogue and the meetings between the prime ministers of the two Korean sides—a process which we wholly welcome.

The inter-Korean dialogue, which people not only in our country but also, I am sure, throughout the world follow with hope, must not be allowed to break down because of incautious, precipitate actions or artificial obstacles placed in its way. We believe that staging the routine large-scale U.S.-South Korean military maneuvers called

Team Spirit-91 in no way helps to create an atmosphere conducive to inter-Korean contacts.

We believe that Korea will, sooner or later, be unified—one people cannot remain eternally divided. But, at the same time, we are also convinced that the Korean nation's reunification must take place in a peaceful, democratic manner in accordance with the will of the entire Korean people and—I would like to emphasize this—without any external interference.

Many suggestions are made as to how to improve the situation in Korea, including suggestions by both Korean sides. In our view, a substantial contribution to this cause could be made by realizing the initiatives advanced by Kim Il-song, general secretary of the WPK Central Committee and president of the DPRK, on 31 May last year and 1 January this year with regard to reducing tension and implementing confidence-building measures on the Korean peninsula, particularly his proposals for the creation of a confederative state and the adoption of a declaration of nonaggression by North and South.

We have pursued our line of supporting all constructive ideas which can help to unravel the tight Korean knot and will continue to do so in contacts with all states that are interested in a peaceful settlement in Korea, above all with the two Korean sides.

[Zhurabayev] There has been a report of the USSR's intention to sell defensive arms to South Korea. What comment can you make on this fact?

[Rogachev] It is the USSR's principled and immutable position that we advocate the cessation of the arms race on the Korean peninsula, and so we will undertake nothing that leads to increased tension in Korea. It seems to me that it would be altogether ideal if deliveries of all arms to that region were reduced or, still better, ended.

Nuclear-Free Korean Penninsula Recommended

SK1902042491 Moscow International Service in Korean 1100 GMT 13 Feb 91

[From the "Focus on Asia" program]

[Text] A report released by the ROK-U.S. relations committee indicates that it is possible to withdraw U.S. nuclear weapons deployed in the ROK without causing a loss to the security of the ROK. This committee is known as an (?expert) organ which gives (?advice) to the Washington and Seoul administrations. A station commentator indicates that the question of nuclear weapons has been a source of tension on the Korean peninsula for a long time.

It is natural for Pyongyang to regard U.S. nuclear weapons deployed in the ROK as a threat to its security. On the other hand, Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo have distrusted the DPRK, which has not allowed experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency into its nuclear facilities. It has been reported that Pyongyang is ready to allow an international inspection team into its nuclear facilities if U.S. nuclear weapons are withdrawn from the peninsula. The DPRK has also held that the Korean peninsula should be turned into a nuclear-free zone.

Those who participated in writing the above report stated that this being the situation, for the ROK, declaring that there exist no nuclear weapons in its territory and presenting evidence showing no existence of nuclear weapons there is politically beneficial to it. If the United States withdraws its nuclear weapons from the south side of the peninsula such a declaration is possible. If such a measure is taken, the military and political situation in northeast Asia will be stabilized. At the same time, Pyongyang, as well, will have grounds to declare that it is ready to discuss the question of nuclear safety with Washington.

According to foreign press reports, in the DPRK-Japan talks held last January to discuss the normalization of relations between the two countries, the DPRK side asked Tokyo to play the role of mediator for talks with Washington on the nuclear issue.

Pyongyang's proposal for turning the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-free zone has won support from many countries, including the Soviet Union and China, both nuclear powers. As it has already declared, the Soviet Union is willing to guarantee denuclearization of the Korean peninsula with other nuclear powers.

As the report of the ROK-U.S. relations committee properly indicated, Washington and Seoul have begun to accept the assertion that the Korean peninsula should be free from nuclear weapons. Of course, this is still nothing but experts' opinions. The problem lies in whether or not Washington and Seoul will officially accept the (?report).

U.S.-ROK 'Team Spirit' Exercises Considered

PM1502130791 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 14 Feb 91 First Edition p 3

["Observer's Column" by A. Golts: "'Team Spirit' Still Goes Ahead"]

[Text] War is a mere bagatelle—maneuvers are the main thing. This Army saw is being confirmed these days in the south of the Korean peninsula. The point is that, contrary to many predictions, the war in the Persian Gulf has by no means prevented the annual U.S.-South Korean "Team Spirit" maneuvers. Support subunits are now being transferred at full steam from the continental United States to take part in these war rehearsals—the 16th in succession.

The ROK Defense Ministry's official spokesman said that "Team Spirit-91" itself will take place in mid-March and last ten days. A total of 100,000 U.S. and South Korean servicemen will be involved. A sizeable number. But, to be fair, I will point out that throughout the

eighties the "Team Spirit" maneuvers were the largest maneuvers conducted by the Pentagon in Asia. The number of troops involved at the time was double the above. So the present maneuvers seem more modest.

The very fact of their being held has—as might have been expected, moreover—elicited a sharp response from the DPRK. In particular, NODONG SINMUN described "Team Spirit-91" as a "rehearsal for a nuclear attack on the North." The newspaper also saw these military rehearsals as confirmation of Washington's and Seoul's intention to preserve the division of Korea in the future.

There seem to be definite grounds for this conclusion. Korea has in fact been divided for many years. A seat of confrontation has smoldered on the peninsula for many years. North-South dialogue is only just beginning to develop. To be honest, the going is tough. Years of confrontation and mutual suspicion have taken their toll on the sides' positions. Improvements are also beginning to emerge. It is significant that it is Pyongyang that is bringing forward the task of eliminating military confrontation, introducing confidence-building measures on the peninsula, turning the DMZ between the two sides into a peace zone, and achieving mutual cuts in armed forces.

Yet at this moment, knowing that "Team Spirit" was and still is one of the sorest points in North-South relations, Washington and Seoul decide to go ahead with these maneuvers. Pyongyang thinks that one of the main tasks is to put a stop to military maneuvers. Once again the DPRK cannot be reproached with lacking flexibility. Not so long ago during talks between the DPRK and ROK prime ministers Pyongyang put forward a compromise proposal. Namely to stop maneuvers—albeit temporarily—for the duration of the talks.

Yet the preparations for the maneuvers are still going ahead. These preparations are be made on the eve of the next round of talks, scheduled for 25 February. So, however you look at it, "Team Spirit-91" looks like a serious challenge. The Gulf war has not only not prevented these maneuvers, but has even given impetus to some old suspicions. So, for instance, combat operations only had to begin for South Korean President No Tae-u to declare that the armed forces were being put in a full state of readiness. YONHAP reported that this step was provoked by fears that "the North would take advantage of the war and engage in provocation against the South." Of course, such actions by no means promote mutual trust.

Holding the "Team Spirit" maneuvers now may, of course, be attributed to a kind of inertia of confrontational thinking in the South Korean and U.S. military departments. It is not impossible that the war has given U.S. strategists new geopolitical plans. If we suppose that the Pentagon is seriously thinking about preserving its military presence in the Persian Gulf for a long time, the increasing role of their Asian bases becomes obvious. After all, they provide a direct link between that region and the U.S. Pacific seaboard. Military installations in South Korea are of fundamental importance for the basing structure in Asia.

In this context the "Team Spirit" maneuvers can be seen as an extension of the gamble on confrontation. That is the reason for the retention of the military bases. If that is the case, such calculations are extremely far-removed from genuine concern for security in Asia and the Pacific.

Yanayev Receives South Korean Ambassador

LD1502173291 Moscow TASS in English 1457 GMT 15 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Oleg Polovko]

[Text] Moscow February 15 TASS—Soviet Vice President Gennadiy Yanayev met South Korean Ambassador to the Soviet Union Kong No-myong here today.

The two discussed Soviet-South Korean relations and several international and regional issues, according to Yanayev's press service.

Southeast Asia & Pacific

Prospect of Cambodian Peace Process Viewed

BK1702070491 Moscow in Cambodian to Cambodia 1100 GMT 16 Feb 91

[Text] Comrade Hor Namhong, foreign minister of the State of Cambodia, on Friday held talks with Thai Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan. The Phnom Penh representative agreed with Bangkok's plan to rebuild Cambodia. Comrade Hor Namhong expressed readiness to take part in a meeting of Cambodia's Supreme National Council [SNC] and the cochairmen of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia [PICC] anytime anywhere. Our commentator Aleksey Nikolayev writes:

After the deterioration of the military situation in Cambodia due to offensives of the opposing forces, there is now a possibility for reconciliation. Early this week, the Thai prime minister coaxed the leaders of opposing Cambodian parties to talk about peace. Apparently the SNC meeting will be held in Jakarta in accordance with the proposal of Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas. The aim is to strive to overcome the differences among the Cambodian parties and prepare the ground for convening in the near future the session of the PICC's Coordinating Committee to solve the Cambodian problem.

Comrade Aleksey Nikolayev continues: I would not predict the outcome of the talks in Jakarta because many times we hoped for a quick peace in Cambodia but fighting erupted again. The latest events testify to this. At the moment, the balance apparently is tilting toward peace but whether this tendency would be reversed or

not depends on the forthcoming meeting of Cambodia's SNC which has to achieve reconciliation, otherwise, everything would be back to square one. Calm would be replaced by fighting from time to time.

Laos Economic Cooperation Agreement Signed

LD1802190391 Moscow Central Television Vostok Program and Orbita Networks in Russian 1530 GMT 18 Feb 91

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] An agreement has been signed in Laos on transferring to a new mechanism of mutual economic ties, the fundamental principles of regulating Laos' debts to the Soviet Union, and on trade and economic cooperation in 1991. Correspondent A. Galkin reports from Laos.

[Galkin] The changes in our country and also in Laos have compelled both countries finally to count money. It must be admitted that the Lao side responded with understanding to the fact that fewer funds will come from the Soviet Union, and, above all, that debts will have to be paid—and not only in the form of parquet flooring tiles and coffee beans, but in freely convertible currency. Formerly, the Soviet side gave funds in response to Lao requests, fully meeting virtually all requests. Though time limits for paying off debts were registered in documents, no one paid any particular attention to them. It was enough for the top leaders of the fraternal countries to meet, and these time limits were all shifted into the distant future. There was long discussion on the relation of the ruble to the dollar. As a result, this ratio was adopted, but not for 15 years, as Soviet experts suggested, but only for the current year.

One must admit that Laos is now better prepared for existence in the conditions of the market than we are. Here, with no long debates, a diversity of forms of ownership has been adopted, the doors have been opened to foreign entrepreneurs, and private dealers now have their hands untied. The results have not been slow to emerge. Here, the socialist ideology dominant in the country is not set against the objective laws of the developments of the economy, something that our legislature is guilty of at all levels.

New Ambassador Appointed to Philippines

PM1902161191 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Feb 91 Union Edition p 6

[Unattributed "Chronicle" report]

[Text] The USSR president has appointed Vitaliy Borisovich Kuchuk USSR ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Philippines.

Near East & South Asia

Reports Continue on 'Aziz's Planned Moscow Visit

Saddam Decision Questioned

LD2102054691 Moscow TASS in English 0533 GMT 21 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Vladimir Matyash]

[Text] Washington February 21 TASS—Baghdad Radio announced that President Saddam Husayn of Iraq had decided to send Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz to Moscow again soon with a reply to the Soviet peace proposals for a political settlement of the Gulf crisis, the ASSOCIATED PRESS news agency reported on Wednesday afternoon.

The report makes no mention of whether the Iraqi president gave consent to accept the Soviet plan to end the Gulf war.

The Baghdad Radio broadcast pointed out that Saddam Husayn presided over a meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council which met in the Iraqi capital to study the proposals of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Bessmertnykh To Meet 'Aziz

AU2102114791 Paris AFP in English 1143 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Madrid, Feb 21 (AFP)—Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh will cut short his visit to Madrid and return to Moscow late Thursday to meet with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz, German diplomatic sources said here Thursday.

Mr. Bessmertnykh, who met with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher on the sidelines of meetings here of a Council of Europe gathering, told him he would be returning to Moscow after meeting with King Juan Carlos later Thursday, the sources said.

His meeting with the king was originally scheduled for Friday.

Mr. Bessmertnykh told Mr. Genscher he would be meeting Mr. 'Aziz in Moscow, the sources added.

Spanish diplomatic sources said the Soviet foreign minister would leave Madrid around 2000 GMT.

Official Warns Against Overestimating Iraq

AU2002142591 Budapest NEPSZABADSAG in Hungarian 16 Feb 91 p 2

[Interview with Viktor Kremenyuk, deputy director of the United States of America and Canada Institute in Moscow, by Peter Dunai in Moscow, on 15 February: "I Would Not Overestimate the Events"—first paragraph is NEPSZABADSAG introduction]

[Text] Viktor Kremenyuk gave an interview to our Moscow correspondent about the Gulf war developments. He expressed cautious optimism, but he also warned about the danger of overestimating the Iraqi readiness.

[Dunai] Can we talk about a breakthrough?

[Kremenyuk] I think that the chances of a peaceful settlement have increased and the possibility of a cease-fire and political settlement has emerged. I would not overestimate the events, however. Considerable military forces continue to face each other on both sides, and the troops are ready for combat. At the same time, we must definitely recognize the weight of Saddam Husayn's declaration, his readiness for a cease-fire and for working out a peaceful settlement.

[Dunai] Does Saddam Husayn really want to settle, or he is only playing for time and planning something else?

[Kremenyuk] Anything is possible. Your version cannot be excluded either.

[Dunai] What was the role of Primakov's recent trip to Baghdad in Saddam Husayn's decision?

[Kremenyuk] Certainly, there is a connection between the two things. Primakov visited Baghdad and, soon after his return, we received the news about the readiness of the Iraqi leader to withdraw. I do not think that the Primakov trip played the determining role in Saddam Husayn's decision. Instead, Saddam Husayn has probably made a realistic analysis of the situation and of the possibilities, and he realized that he would also sustain serious losses in the upcoming ground combat, although the Americans must also take such losses into account.

As for that certain second alternative, the Iraqi leader obviously considered the possibility of making the heads of the coalition confront each other, including the Soviet Union and the United States. In my opinion, Primakov's trip made it even clearer that Washington's views differ from Moscow's views. While the Soviet Union advocates an end to the fighting and a peaceful settlement as soon as possible, the American position continues to be a tough one. Saddam Husayn has probably realized that, following Primakov's trip, the Americans might increasingly suspect that Moscow and Baghdad were negotiating behind Washington's back. Saddam Husayn must have also noticed the cooling of Soviet-U.S. relations, something that, if continued, could have a dividing effect on the anti-Iraqi coalition. He would only benefit from this.

Ignatenko Holds Briefing on Gorbachev Peace Plan

PM2102122191 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 21 Feb 91 Union Edition p 4

[Report by G. Alimov: "V. Ignatenko: We Await Specific Results"]

[Text] Vitaliy Ignatenko, aide to the USSR president, held a routine briefing on 19 February for Soviet and foreign journalists. The main subject was the plan put forward by M.S. Gorbachev for a peaceful settlement to the Gulf crisis.

Judging by the replies to the questions, the Kremlin is attentively following the world community's reaction to the new Soviet initiatives. As Ignatenko put it, the initiatives have been assessed as an act within the framework of the UN Security Council resolution on the Gulf. We expect there to be some results in the next few days, he said.

So far, however, the details of the "Gorbachev plan" have not been revealed. Once Baghdad responds, the request to keep M.S. Gorbachev's message confidential will probably be lifted.

The presidential aide was asked whether the massive bombing of Baghdad in recent days is a kind of allied response to Gorbachev's proposals. The presidential aide rejected this assumption, stating that "we have no grounds to believe that this is some kind of specific response." The war itself simply has a logic of destruction, and M.S. Gorbachev's recent initiatives are actually aimed at altering that logic and directing it toward a peaceful settlement. The journalists were also told that the letter sent to President G. Bush did not contain a request to suspend the beginning of the allied troops' ground offensive in the Gulf. But, V. Ignatenko believes, any beginning of ground operations before Baghdad's reply to the USSR president's proposal is received would create an entirely new situation and "it will require an appropriate [adekvatnyy] Soviet reaction in this situation," which will be forthcoming if combat operations on the ground begin in the next few days. "This would create a new situation," the presidential aide stated. He expressed the opinion that a ground offensive will produce nothing in principle. It will only produce more casualties and bloodshed. The Soviet position, he noted, is to avoid this. An offensive today, if we receive a reply from Saddam Husayn, would be "redundant."

V. Ignatenko gave information about R. Reagan's letter to M.S. Gorbachev. The former U.S. president sent his sincere thanks for the congratulations on his 80th birthday. Reagan warmly recalled his meetings with Gorbachev and expressed confidence that the commitment shown by the USSR president to the continuation of collaboration between our countries is a great contribution to the "cause of strengthening peace and brotherhood between people." Reagan conveyed Nancy Reagan's best wishes to R.M. Gorbachev. He expressed the hope that personal contacts would be maintained.

Gorbachev Peace Plan, Iraqi Efforts Viewed

Varying Reactions Noted

LD2002182791 Moscow TASS in English 1814 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS international observer Yuriy Tyssovskiy]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—It would not be an exaggeration to say that today the eyes of all people who cherish principles of humanity and peace are fixed on Moscow. The coming days will show whether the bloodshed in the Gulf continues, or it will be possible to put an end to the war.

The latest Soviet peace initiative was met by the world far from unanimously, although everybody agreed that its wording was in strict compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions and the recent Soviet-U.S. statement on the Gulf.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said the initiative was a historic possibility to avoid a military solution fraught with thousands of casualties on both sides. The influential FINANCIAL TIMES newspaper demanded that the West pursue a similar course and not put forward any additional conditions and demands before Iraq.

It is necessary to focus on halting the dangerous development of events. Other issues could be discussed after Iraq withdraws its troops from Kuwait without any pre-conditions.

Reassuring news has been received from Luxembourg, where the EC foreign ministers welcomed Soviet moves aimed to resolve the crisis.

It is worth mentioning that Washington has not completely rejected the Soviet moves, although President George Bush made it clear that he was not fully satisfied with them.

Peace initiatives are being implemented in conditions of serious time trouble, and this considerably complicates the process. Another negative factor is that the war has been launched on a full scale.

In these conditions, restraint and a high feeling of responsibility from the opposing sides is needed as never before to give peace a real chance of success. Are they ready for this?

In order to boost the emerging peace process, Baghdad should make hard, but necessary in the current conditions moves and announce a strict date for the beginning of its troop withdrawal from Kuwait. Multinational forces, and first of all the United States, should recall U.N. Security Council resolution 678 and not exceed the powers determined by the international community.

Going beyond such powers could have unpredictable consequences for the region and the whole world. The threat is real. Suffice it to recall a statement by Tom Brokaw from ABC television that President Bush is saying nothing about destroying Iraq and removing Saddam Husayn, but as the war machine is gaining momentum, it seems that this is the United States' main aim, he said.

Commenting on the Soviet initiative, U.S. Permanent Representative at the United Nations Thomas Pickering said the Soviet Union and the United States had different aims in the conflict. The ambassador was clearly implying to some "Soviet interests" in the region.

Pickering's words could be interpreted in another way, which he did not imply, but which is clear to everybody, i.e. Moscow aims to bring peace to the region, while Washington seems to have completely diametric aims.

Arabs Divided on Proposals

PM1902152591 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 19 Feb 91 Union Edition p 4

[Report by correspondent M. Kozhevnikov: "Arabs Split Again"]

[Text] Damascus—Reaction varied in the Arab world to Iraq's proposals concerning a settlement of the Persian Gulf crisis.

For instance, the foreign ministers of the six Gulf Cooperation Council states, plus Egypt and Syria, voiced distrust of the sincerity of Baghdad's intentions. According to reports from Cairo, during the conference there the ministers demanded the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and stressed the need to restore the Arab state's sovereignty and independence and to guarantee the security of its borders in the future.

Egyptian President H. Mubarak was pretty definite in his opinion of Iraq's initiative. According to him, it contains nothing new that might indicate a change in Baghdad's stance, it merely piles on further unacceptable conditions.

King Husayn of Jordan is of completely the opposite view. He described the Iraqi proposals as "an important and crucial step." A message from the Jordanian monarch to President Saddam Husayn voices support for Baghdad's initiative and stresses that it confirms "Iraq's desire for peace and its wish to abide by the principles of the international rule of law."

Agencies reported from Rabat a statement by the Moroccan Information Ministry. It says, in part, that the head of state—King Hassan—has expressed satisfaction in connection with the the readiness shown by Baghdad to contribute to the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 660.

As is known, the range of opinion among Arab leaders concerning the Iraqi proposals is pretty great. It is certainly evidence of the continuing significant differences between them in their approaches to events in the Pesian Gulf. At the same time, the majority of capitals in the region are now watching with rapt attention the Soviet Union's efforts to convince Baghdad of the need for an immediate withdrawal of its forces from Kuwait, which would make it possible to avoid further bloodshed. Arab observers stress that as a result of heightened Soviet diplomatic activity rays of hope have appeared of

a political settlement of the crisis. Although the optimists, who reckon that Saddam Husayn is capable of making concessions, are considerably outnumbered by the pessimists.

In the meantime, Iraqi propaganda retains its bellicose tone. Last Saturday Baghdad radio, in a pause between loud marches, broadcast a commentary celebrating the Iraqi army's fighting spirit, readiness for the land battle, and confidence of victory.

'Cautious Optimism' Noted

TA2002233291 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1305 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Report on an interview with Valentin Borisov, chief Middle East affairs editors at the NOVOSTI new agency, by foreign affairs editor Gid'on Remez; Borisov remarks in English]

[Text] Will the Iraqis have a glimmer of hope in Moscow? So far, Soviet spokesmen have expressed cautious optimism regarding Baghdad's reply to the Soviet proposals. We heard statements in the same vein this morning from Valentin Borisov, the chief Middle East affairs editor in the NOVOSTI news agency.

[Begin Borisov recording] We have a cautious optimism concerning all packet of proposals and we hope for better results, that some solution will be reached that the conflict will be finished by peaceful means. [end recording]

[Remez] How, then, can they explain the very bitter attacks that the Soviet press has recently come out with against the United States and the West as a whole in the context of the Gulf war? Is this a new position related to the appearance of a new group among those vying for power in the USSR?

[Begin Borisov recording] You are quite right, to some extent. You see, the situation is now going out of the control of the mandate of the United Nations. You see, many citizens are being perished in this war and the economic potential of this country is being destroyed completely. That is why it caused certain anxiety among those who supported this resolution of the United Nations. [end recording]

[Remez] Still, do not make any mistake, says Borisov—undoubtedly in the name of the Soviet establishment—this criticism has been heard for some time now, it is not new.

[Begin Borisov recording] This tendency is not only today. You see, it was the same tendency yesterday and before yesterday. You see, during recent days, I did not hear about any conflicts with these people. [end recording]

[Remez] I have not heard about any conflict among the Soviets, said Borisov, despite the vast reportage from Moscow that this has become the chief bone of contention among the liberals, the democrats, and the conservatives in the army and the party in the USSR.

Soviet Motives Explained

LD2002223291 Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in Arabic 1400 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Commentary by Andrey Vasilyev]

[Text] Vitaliy Ignatenko, head of the press office of the USSR president, has said that Gorbachev's plan for a settlement in the Arab Gulf was received with understanding, according to preliminary echoes, and was considered an action within the context of the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions. Our commentator Andrey Vasilyev writes:

Regrettably, we still do not have final and trustworthy information on the attitude of the leadership of Iraq and Saddam Husayn to the Soviet proposals. On this in particular, and above all, depends the course of the coming events. Since Gorbachev's plan was presented in secret, and remains so until now, it is impossible to predict Saddam Husayn's reaction to any definite proposals. Yet the situation, so it seems, will become clear in a few days.

But now we want to dwell in detail on the reason why the Soviet Union took the diplomatic initiative at this time in particular, when the fighting in the Arab Gulf is coming to a climax. The Soviet Union entered into negotiations with Iraq on the possibility of a peaceful solution by 15 January 1991, the final date fixed by the United Nations, as is known. But the traditionally close contacts did not help in convincing the president of the Iraqi Republic of the need to show political realism. After the start of the fighting, a period of silenced passed, which was interrupted by President Gorbachev's statement on the danger of the escalation of the military operations. This was followed by a new outburst of diplomatic activity, which led to Tariq 'Aziz taking the Soviet president's proposals to Saddam Husayn for consideration.

The Soviet leadership has pointed out, and continues to point out that it believes in the need for Iraq to implement UN resolutions by withdrawing the Iraqi forces from Kuwait unconditionally. President Gorbachev's press secretary said: We believe that the ground attack will achieve nothing in principle; what is important is that the country is not completely destroyed. This attack will only result in the shedding of new blood and new victims.

It is possible—from the statements of some diplomats and Soviet politicians—to realize that some quarters in the USSR are very anxious at the possibility of the complete destruction of the Iraqi military and economic capability. This would lead to an acute rise in the influence of the United States, Israel, Turkey—and Iran

to a certain extent—in the Middle East, and to the weakening of the USSR's influence.

It is logical to assume that President Gorbachev's close advisors—who traditionally point to the Middle East as one of the important fields, if not the most important one, for the military-diplomatic activity—came up with the initiative for negotiations with the Iraqi leadership. If this time Saddam listens to the sound of reason, it will mean avoiding a shedding of blood, and a victory for Soviet diplomacy. But if he does not, grave consequences await him. As to Soviet diplomacy, it will be committing a mistake if it falls into a state of ambiguity.

Allied, Iraqi Reactions Viewed

PM2002185491 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 21 Feb 91 Union Edition p 1

[Article by IZVESTIYA diplomatic correspondent M. Yusin: "The Persian Gulf: Will the Soviet Initiative Stop the War?"]

[Excerpt] Yuliy Vorontsov, the USSR's permanent representative to the United Nations, speaking at a Security Council session in New York, said that Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz would fly to Moscow Wednesday 20 February to give Baghdad's response to the plan for a peace settlement proposed by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev Monday. "I hope the response will be positive," Vorontsov said.

But the USSR Foreign Ministry, from which we requested additional information this morning, told us that the Foreign Ministry knows nothing about a return visit by 'Aziz. When this issue of IZVESTIYA was signed to press no information had been received from official Soviet sources to confirm Vorontsov's words.

By the evening of 19 February the reaction of the main parties involved in the conflict to the Soviet president's initiative had become known. The United States and Britain rejected Gorbachev's proposal. In Bush's words, "the Soviet plan falls well short of what would be required." The British government rejected the USSR's initiative "inasmuch as it does not meet the demands contained in the Security Council resolutions."

At the same time, commentators point out that certain nuances can be detected in the Americans' response, which seems categorical at first glance. Thus, for instance, Bush stated that to meet Gorbachev's request, he is not revealing the contents of the Soviet initiative, "in the interests of its fullest possible use." Observers conclude from these words that the decision to start a land offensive, which now seems almost inevitable, will probably be postponed for a day or two—at least until Baghdad has responded to the USSR's proposal.

But the Americans are afraid that Saddam Husayn's hidden objective is to gain time by diplomatic maneuvering and drag out his reply, thereby making the allies postpone the offensive. This scenario is not at all to Washington's liking. For Iraq, the reckoning is now not in days, but in hours. Unless Husayn makes an immediate response to the USSR's proposal, the offensive will almost certainly begin by the end of the week. The command of U.S. Armed Forces in Saudi Arabia has stated that the allies' troops are ready to begin the operation at any moment.

Paris reacted to the Soviet initiatives more cautiously than Washington or London. "Saddam Husayn's response to Gorbachev's proposal must be speedy, unequivocal, and strictly in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions," French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas stated. AFP cited remarks by French diplomats asserting that the Soviet proposals are not adequate, since they do not indicate the dates by which the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait must begin and end. At the same time, Dumas' statement is assessed as an appeal to the United States to give Baghdad time to respond to the Soviet proposals. [passage omitted]

U.S. View Supports 'Old Thinking'

LD2002122991 Moscow World Service in English 2300 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Commentary by Vladislav Kozyakov]

[Text] President Gorbachev's efforts to end the war in the Persian Gulf have been described as the last chance to avert ground actions that would be fraught with heavy casualties for both Iraq and the mulitnational forces. Vladislav Kozyakov comments.

The backbone of Gorbachev's peace plan is a demand for Iraq to abide, at once and unconditionally by the Security Council resolution to withdraw troops from Kuwait. This demand is fresh evidence that this country has remained loyal to the tasks and goals the international community set itself to counter the aggressor. The Soviet position has drawn an appraisal [as heard] from Washingtion and many other capitals.

President George Bush has described it as constructive. The Soviet Union, he said, is trying very hard and it is trying within the mandate of the UN resolutions, and that is the key point. The Soviet initiatives on the other hand are aimed at taking into account Iraqi interests as well, and help settle the other regional problems, including the Arab-Israeli conflict. This country has turned down any Iraqi attempt at laying conditions. At the same time, Moscow has warned against underestimating what Saddam Husayn has stated for the firt time: Iraqi readiness to pull out of Kuwait and abide by the Security Council resolutions.

At any rate Deputy Iraqi Premier Tariq 'Aziz described his Monday meeting with President Gorbachev in Moscow as important and the atmosphere at that meeting as cordial and objective. Gorbachev's plan has three questions to ask: Could the worst be averted if the Americans and the Iraqis both lost tens of thousands, and if the war got out of control, and could negotiators

and diplomats help achieve the goals set by the UN Security Council resolutions? It would seem everybody must welcome efforts in this direction.

But response from the United States include spears [sentence as heard]. Some Americans fear lest the Soviet Union raise the ceasefire question. If it does so it will upset the war plans. Other Americans have this doubt: What if the Soviet Union wins with its peace efforts more influence in the Middle East? A NEW YORK TIMES observer even suggested the United States counter any regional (?startup) that involved the Soviet Union. Statements of this kind smack of what seems to have become a thing of the past. They smack of confrontation. Behind them is also the obvious wish of supporters of old thinking to wage the Gulf war at any cost, even if the war leads to enormous casualties and bursts the UN mandate.

But this mandate does not at all boil down to force. Resolution 678 of the Security Council allows all the necessary measures to restore peace and security in the region, not only missiles or bombers but also diplomats and the talks being held under Gorbachev's plan for one.

'Land War Tornado' Feared

PM1902214391 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 20 Feb 91 First Edition p 4

["Editorial Commentary": "Giving Peace a Chance"]

[Text] Stormy weather prevails in the Persian Gulf zone. The allied forces' operation "Desert Storm" against Iraq threatens to turn into a devastating and bloody land war tornado.

Assessing the situation that has taken shape and that calls for immediate reaction in order to forestall a further escalation of the conflict, the Soviet Union has put forward a concrete plan of action. It takes account of the 15 February statement by Iraq whose main element is the readiness to withdraw Iraqi troops from occupied Kuwait. Clarifications furnished by the Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz at the talks with the Soviet leadership during his Moscow visit have also been taken into consideration.

For the first time in the past month the needle of the political barometer has swung toward "fair." A glimmer of light has appeared on the gloomy horizon. T. 'Aziz has departed for Baghdad without delay. An early reply to the Soviet proposals is expected from the Iraqi side. The leading participants of the anti-Iraq coalition have been briefed on the proposals. Nothing is being done in secret. The actions of the Soviet Union are dictated by concern about the dangerous development of events, their possible catastrophic consequences, a desire to find a political settlement on the basis of the UN Security Council resolutions and to secure a solution to the key problems of the Near and Middle East and to ensure the future security of the region.

A great deal now depends on Baghdad's response, on its common sense, political far-sightedness, and responsibility for the fate of the Iraqi people and the region as a whole. Responsibility for the success or failure of the quest for peace will be borne in equal measure by all the participants in the conflict. After all, ultimately a political settlement depends on the contribution of each one of them, on the good will, readiness for compromise, and the desire to meet each other half-way which they demonstrate.

Within this context, the bias toward a possible unleashing of the land war without even waiting for the results of the peace soundings is causing concern. Ground "probing" of Iraqi positions is under way, with the risk of provoking battles along the whole length of the front. Massing of allied forces on the Iraqi and Kuwaiti borders continues. In news agency reports Kuwait features practically only as a proving ground where the new U.S. war doctrine is being rehearsed with the involvement of the ground and air forces. You get the impression that certain people are blinded with the idea of "punishing" S. Husayn, that the war machine is already running at full speed, and that the brass hats are not given to stopping it, no matter what success politicians and diplomats may achieve.

Meanwhile, the world public is alarmed as it has never been before at the situation in the Persian Gulf zone. The first weeks of the war have already resulted in an ecological catastrophe for the whole planet—the spillage [vybros] of a vast quantity of oil in the sea, destruction on a colossal scale, and loss of human life. What is to be expected next when the battle, which has been described as the biggest battle of the past 50 years, is unleashed? After all, more than 1 million soldiers of the warring sides are concentrated in the minute theater of military operations. Tens of thousands of them will die. Will the capital of Kuwait survive? How many oil torches will flare up in the course of combat actions, poisoning our atmosphere?

Hundreds of letters and appeals from mass political and public organizations in the Union and abroad and from our readers have been arriving at the editorial office during the past days. They contain one demand: Stop the bloodbath; and one appeal: Give peace a chance.

UN's 'Excessive Haste' Cited

LD1802141391 Moscow World Service in English 1210 GMT 18 Feb 91

[Commentary by Yuriy Solton]

[Text] Today, 18 February is the day for Soviet-Iraqi talks in Moscow, where Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz has already arrived. For the Soviet Union the talks are conducted by President Mikhail Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh. We will be reporting progress and the results of the negotiations, and now a commentary by Yuriy Solton.

The last hope to avoid a total war—this is how many people assess the talks in Moscow. Though such claims are too categorical they have a large share of the truth. The trigger has been cocked and the finger is on the trigger, the command is about to be given. To believe statements by the military, Baghdad has been given only three days for deliberations. It is possible there would have been not even such a pause but President Mikhail Gorbachev has asked President George Bush to put off the start of the ground operation against Iraq so as to clarify the final conditions on which Iraqi troops can be pulled out of Kuwait.

As a result of a trip to Baghdad last week by personal envoy of the Soviet president, Yevgeniy Primakov, for the first time since the war began Saddam Husayn proclaimed the readiness to carry out the United Nations decisions that demand the restoration of Kuwait's independence. True, though, the Iraqi leader attached such conditions to his readiness that caused doubts about the sincerity of his intentions. The Iraqi leader's proposals were rejected out of hand by the United States, Britain and other countries. But to my mind haste is wrong in issues of war and peace. As I see it excessive haste was displayed as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 was being adopted, as a result there was a month long bloodbath and destruction with heavy civilian casualties.

Saddam Husayn's statement can be regarded both as a propaganda ploy and an attempt to gain time to regroup his forces. But another thing is also obvious: It is for the first time Baghdad has expressed a desire to cooperate in a search for a political solution. Of course the linkages of the freeing of Kuwait with the solution of other problems in the region, above all the Palestinian problem, are unacceptable. Yet whatever the outcome of the conflict these problems will remain. It is a different thing that the Iraqi pullout from Kuwait is a prerequisite for their solution. That is the stand of Moscow in principle.

At the same time, since there are only a few hundred kilometers separating the Soviet southern borders from Iraq, there is growing anxiety in the Soviet Union over the possible expansion of hostilities in the Persian Gulf in the course of which weapons of mass annihilation may possibly be used. The catastrophic consequences of a total war could cancel out all the noble aims for the liberation of Kuwait. Moscow is making its utmost effort to prevent such a war and to find political solutions. Of course in this case everything will depend on whether Saddam Husayn changes his conditions for the withdrawal from Kuwait. If such a thing happens we will learn about it perhaps within hours.

UN Secretary General Comments

LD2102081691 Moscow TASS in English 0727 GMT 21 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Nikolay Maslov]

[Text] United Nations February 21 TASS—United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar described as "a unique opportunity" the chance which is being provided by the Soviet initiative concerning a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis.

He told journalists on Wednesday that the pause with a reply by the Iraqi leadership to the Soviet initiative was possibly caused by technical problems or the need to have more time for decision-making.

If the Iraqis "need 24 more hours, it is understandable", the U.N. chief said.

Shevardnadze Supports Peace Moves

LD2102000691 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 2300 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Excerpts] A constituent conference of the Soviet Foreign Political Association has taken place in Moscow. Our correspondent Andrey Trapeznikov reports. [passage omitted]

[Trapeznikov] Eduard Amvrosiyevich Shevardnadze, former USSR foreign minister, was unanimously elected president of the association. Several USSR ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary, and also Popov and Sobchak, chairmen of the Moscow and Leningrad Soviets, people's deputies, are members of the board of the new organization.

After the conference ended, Eduard Amvrosiyevich Shevardnadze, newly elected president of the Foreign Political Association, answered several questions from journalists, among which, about his attitude to the development of events in the Persian Gulf.

[Begin Shevardnadze recording] I support any activity, diplomatic or political. When the latest resolution of the Security Council established a good will pause, it was intended to give the Iraqi leadership a possibility to ponder upon everything, to get an idea of the consequences, and to use the good will pause for invigorating diplomatic nad political efforts by all states, including the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, this pause was not used efficiently. I would like to say, however, that around the 10th or 12th—before the hostilities started—the Foreign Ministry submitted a proposal to our corresponding establishments to the effect that, after corresponding consultations with our partners in the Security Council, a peace initiative should be put forward. Well, such a decision was not adopted then—maybe organizational reshuffling hampered that. In principle, however, peaceful initiatives, certain ideas on peaceful proposals were prepared, even at that time.

It seems to me that everything that is being done now is a continuation of the Soviet leadership's peaceful efforts and the policy we used to implement as regards the Persian Gulf, which I consider perfect. [end recording]

Reports, Commentaries Assess Gulf War

UN Post-War Role Viewed

AU2002122691 Munich SUEDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG in German 20 FEb 91 p 10

[Article by Vadim Zagladin, deputy chief of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee, chairman of the Foreign Policy Commission, and President Gorbachev's foreign policy adviser: "Drawing the Necessary Lessons From the Events"]

[Text] Fighting is going on in the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless many people are raising questions that concern the time after the Gulf war. One of them is the question of whether all states of the region will preserve their present borders. I would answer like this: The actions were taken on the basis of the resolution of the UN Security Council—not to change existing borders, but to reestablish them, that is to say, to free Kuwait.

In addition to the liberation of Kuwait, there are several other unresolved issues in the Middle East region. They all have to be finally solved, even if not all of them are connected with the present Gulf war. For example, the Palestinian problem must be solved in a just way. In addition, the settlement of a far more comprehensive problem, that is, the normalization of relations between the Arab states and Israel, is at issue. In this context, the security of all these countries and peoples must, of course, be guaranteed. Regarding the Kurdish question, the main point here is the complete implementation of human rights for the Kurds. As I was told, 85 percent of the Kurdish territories in Iraq were turned into "scorched earth."

Today the international public is already considering what kind of security structure might be created in the Middle East region, so that it is able to prevent regimes that are similar to that of Saddam Husayn and oriented toward expansion by methods of force. In principle, in every country the character of a regime is a matter for the people themselves, even if we in the Soviet Union unreservedly sympathize with democratic and peaceful regimes. Without interfering in the internal affairs of the peoples of the region, the world community can do much to prevent an expansion. In my opinion, in order to ensure secure peace in the Middle East, it would be very important if, first of all, all countries of the region were to agree on the renunciation of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, secondly, all countries were to implement the principle of a reasonable minimum of conventional weapons, which has already been translated into reality in Europe and requires that armament have a clearly defensive character, and if, thirdly, the structure of arms exports to this region (even better, to any region) were to be changed on the basis of the principle of a reasonable minimum, and its volume were to be reduced. In short, a regional security system has to be created for the Middle East.

Is it possible to create such a security system without the participation of one or several great powers, or must this structure have a purely inter-Arab character? The Arab countries are in the majority in the Middle East region, but there are also non-Arab states, first of all Israel, that have the same right to participate in the creation of the security system. Without their participation, there would be no security in the region.

I think that the great powers, above all the members of the UN Security Council, maybe European countries, too, should participate in the creation of such a system. UN guarantees will certainly be required. In general, the United Nations must play an increasingly important role, precisely in the solution of problems of this region.

I suppose that the Gulf war and its consequences will not only affect the Middle East region. Many things will change in the whole world. Therefore, it is our joint concern to draw all the necessary lessons form todays' tragic events and to jointly achieve a reliable, guaranteed general security system, something that is often called a new, really peaceful world order.

Terrorism, New Dangers Spawned

91UF0470A Moscow LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in Russian No 6, 13 Feb 91 p 1

[Article by LITERATURNAYA GAZETA political observer Igor Belyayev: "Persian Gulf: The 28th Day of War"]

[Text] The war in the Persian Gulf region is clearly dragging out. For the first time in history, in front of our very eyes an ecological war has begun, the destructive effects of which are just now being calculated by experts.

The Iraqi dictator has yet one more "secret" weapon he intends to use. The initial signs of use of this weapon have already come into view. I am referring to terrorism on a global scale.

Something took place last week which should put us on alert. The call "To Arms!" was broadcast by powerful Baghdad Radio, now called "Battle Radio" (its programs are heard even on the east coast of the United States). American and West European experts have interpreted this, not without justification, as an order to Iraqi terrorist agents in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Certain code call signs have been used in this regard—"kutayba," "madar," "aymen," and "muntaser." The order was signed by a mysterious "maamun" from a certain "Central Command." The first decoding of the order, coming as no surprise to American and West European analysts, shows that we are talking about bringing Saddam Husayn's terrorist groups abroad to a state of readiness.

I am convinced that resorting to terrorist acts is one of the Iraqi dictator's very last chances to stay afloat. He will do so in the event of a decisive crisis in the course of the Persian Gulf War in favor of the anti-Iraq coalition.

It is possible that in the very near future we may witness gunfire and explosions in all world capitals, including Moscow. This is not my fantasy. Prior to writing about it, I spoke with my Arab colleagues. They share my opinion. Coming from their mouths, such an evaluation sounds like a friendly warning, and not intimidation. It would seem, therefore, that we must be prepared now for an event of this nature. We know that a great many of our fellow countrymen have perished abroad during the past five or six years at the hands of various terrorist groups. More than 60, as I recall! Let us not forget about this, and let us not allow ourselves to be caught unawares.

This does not fit in with our concepts of the rules for waging modern war, of course. We must take into account the fact that we are dealing with an aggressor who has flouted all the norms of international law, however.

Today we have occasion to read and hear a great many varied assessments on the position and role of the Soviet Union, actively promoting an immediate cessation of the war in the Persian Gulf as well as the unconditional liberation of Kuwait through political means. How is our position explained? Primarily through a striving to ensure the achievement of a noble aim without regional or global shocks. For in front of our very eyes every "balance of interests" which today exists in the Near and Middle East might be completely destroyed. This is far from unimportant to us—we want to move towards the settlement of regional conflicts, not towards their exacerbation.

When 29 states are warring side by side (there are 28 in the anti-Iraq coalition), the consequences are unforeseen. But again this obligates us to facilitate the quickest possible end to the war. Especially since a 30th participant may indeed appear.

I am referring to Israel. Israel has been subject to missile bombardment and sustained casualties, although having declared earlier, prior to the outbreak of the war, that it would not be a participant. In following exclusively the logic of expanding the conflict at any price, Saddam Husayn has decided otherwise. The Soviet Union has expressed sympathy with the people of Israel who have suffered as a result of missile attack. Now they are talking about a responsive strike in Tel Aviv. What kind of strike will this be? If it takes place. The Israeli intention to dispatch a group of commandos to Iraq to seize Saddam Husayn merits some attention....

A great deal of conjecture has also been raised by the flight of Iraqi military aircraft to Iran. It is asserted, in particular, that these might also be used against Israel, although Iranian leaders have declared their intention to retain them until the end of the war.

We see that the war in the Persian Gulf region is replete with surprises. It has indeed become such a dramatic event that the USSR president was prompted to send his special representative, academician Ye. Primakov, to Baghdad. The aim of this mission, Primakov told me prior to his flight, is to convince Saddam Husayn to withdraw from Kuwait and stop this war which is engendering ever newer dangers.

'Violence Virus' May Spread

91UF0473A Moscow ZA RUBEZHOM in Russian No 5, 25-31 Jan 91 p 1

[Dmitriy Volskiy "70 Lines" column: "First Lessons of the War"]

[Text] Only a short time has elapsed since war erupted in the Persian Gulf, but the first conclusions may already be drawn. First, however, we should look back a little, at the recent past.

Before my eyes are reinforcing bars bent by explosions and ferroconcrete structures, covered with the unrelenting sand, scattered many kilometers. This is all that was left of an Iraqi oil-distillation complex situated in the vicinity of the Gulf. Not after the present bombing, it is true, but after the recent war with Iran. It was hardly over before not far off, like a desert mirage, there emerged a unique structure of glass and alloys—a new airport for the commercial city of al-Basrah. Is it still intact today? Iraq had only just begun to recover from one war before it immediately found itself involved in another, even more devastating. This is not simply the whim of fate.

The whole world knew full well that it was Saddam Husayn, obsessed with a desire to establish his domination over the oil-bearing zone of the Gulf, who unleashed the war with Iran. The world knew, but remained silent. The United States even prompted Baghdad to attack Khomeyni Iran, which it hated. We, on the other hand, counting the Baghdad regime as a "natural ally in the anti-imperialist struggle," persistently supplied it with weapons. Together with China and the West European countries, incidentally. Thus it was all this connivance, to put it no more strongly, on the part of the most influential states that untied Saddam Husayn's hands for the new aggression which brought about the present war.

The aggressor is now incurring just punishment. But one feels here not satisfaction but, rather, distress and alarm. Not only from a natural sympathy with the Iraqi people but also from fear in the face of the consequences of a protracted war. It is clear that it could spill over beyond the framework of the aims outlined by the well-known Security Council Resolution 678. There are circles that would like not to confine themselves to the liberation of Kuwait but to take advantage of the situation to wipe out Iraq's entire military and economic potential and, perhaps, dismember the country, maybe.

For his part, Saddam Husayn, having proclaimed Allah's "great battle" against Satan, does not conceal the fact that he sees as the sole way out of the trap into which he has driven his country the globalization of the conflict. Missile attacks on Israel, an appeal to Iran to enter the

war, the first terrorist acts—these bear this out. As also the Muslim demonstrations in support of Saddam Husayn.

This is why it is so necessary now to shorten the timeframe of the war and localize it to the liberation of Kuwait. There are opportunities for this. After all, combat operations have yet to assume irreversible inertia, which affords an opportunity for a new "pause for peace." At the same time, however, reports are coming from Baghdad concerning intensified discord at the top and ferment in the masses, which would help realize such a "pause." The diplomatic efforts of various countries would come in useful here.

It is very important in this connection that, in spite of the pressure of the conservatives, Moscow's policy in the Gulf region has not changed following the resignation of E. Shevardnadze. We support the Security Council resolution, as before, and are interacting politically with the United States and the West European and Arab states that have dispatched troops as part of the "multinational force." But continuation of our contacts with Baghdad and also with its supporters, primarily in the PLO—contacts that the Western powers do not have—is useful also.

We, on the other hand, have a vital need for the speediest termination of the war in the Gulf. It is not for nothing that it has been necessary to declare a state of high combat readiness in the southern military districts. The measures to safeguard environmental security are appropriate also. For who knows what lethal clouds, toxic rain and other monsters as yet unknown, bacteriological, say, could move north in the event of an escalation of the war.

But the main real danger lies elsewhere even—in the fact that the violence virus has a tendency to spread rapidly, and there is favorable soil in our country for this. Reliable barriers to it cannot be erected unless compliance with the wishes of the world community is achieved. It is its wishes and interests common to all mankind, not dubious strategic calculations and ideological cliches, by which we should be guided at this time. Which, of course, applies not just to the Soviet Union alone.

Diplomatic Efforts Urged

91UF0471A Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 13 Feb 91 p 5

[Article by Andrey Balebanov under the "Commentator's Opinion" rubric: "Peacemaking Is Urgently Required"]

[Text] Rejecting one diplomatic initiative after another proposed by a number of countries and directed towards ending the war in the Persian Gulf, Iraq is essentially making ever more shaky any hopes for ending combat operations before they assume all-encompassing proportions. In his last radio broadcast to the Iraqi people, President Saddam Husayn praised the steadfastness of his troops and declared that his country has no intention of declining the role determined for it by Allah. In spite of what would seem to be a dead end brought about by Baghdad's policies, USSR President M.S. Gorbachev believes it is necessary to set in motion all key factors for reaching a political settlement of the conflict based on the United Nations Security Council resolutions. With this aim in mind the Soviet leader has sent his special representative, Ye.M. Primakov, to Baghdad to meet with Saddam Husayn.

The scope of the war in the Gulf is becoming such that the world community would not have imagined it. Although data on casualties, both on the Iraqi side and that of the multi-national forces, is hidden and hushed up, it is quite clear that there are casualties, many in fact, including among the peaceful population. Tremendous material damage has already been caused by combat activities, and the spilling of a gigantic quantity of oil into the Persian Gulf may turn into a true ecological disaster. Under these conditions, it would seem that any diplomatic initiative directed towards a swiftest possible cessation of the war must be welcomed in every way. This was a specific area of discussion at a news conference which took place in the Kremlin with A.S. Dzasokhov, chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Committee on International Affairs.

As these lines were being written, Roland Dumas, France's minister of foreign affairs, arrived unexpectedly in Moscow on a one-day visit. His arrival goes beyond the framework of a usual visit of the head of the French foreign policy department, not just because he decided to leave Paris at the height of the war in the Persian Gulf, in which his country is directly involved. R. Dumas is the first minister from an anti-Iraq coalition state to visit the Soviet capital since the outbreak of combat operations. It would be logical to assume in this regard that the French minister will be speaking not only on behalf of his own country, but for the entire Western bloc. It is expected that a Soviet-French declaration on the Persian Gulf will be adopted with respect to the results of the Moscow talks.

Meanwhile, the latest reports from the front show that the American command is planning to unleash a ground offensive not sooner than in one to two weeks time. It cannot be ruled out that these plans are simply a camouflage, military cunning designed to assure the element of surprise. Although the Iraqi Army has suffered great casualties, its combat fighting ability has not yet been crushed, a fact which alarms the American military leaders. In the opinion of U.S. Defense Secretary R. Cheney, the enemy is still too strong to be rushing ahead with a ground attack. The United States is apparently relying on the premise that the more time goes by, the more the Iraqi Army will suffer and the fewer casualties will be endured by the allies. On the other hand, however, American diplomats are seriously beginning to be worried about an explosion of anti-American sentiment in the Arab world.

In order for peace to reign throughout the Middle East, the conflagration of war in the Persian Gulf must be quashed as soon as possible. Today, as events in this part of the globe become ever more dramatic in their nature, a diplomatic offensive by various countries can and must stifle the cannon volleys. Otherwise, the consequences of war may become such that they are irreparable for all mankind.

'Humanitarian Truce Sought'

PM2002161991 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 19 Feb 91 First Edition p 5

[TASS report: "Message To USSR President"]

[Text] In connection with the continuing war in the Persian Gulf zone and the USSR President's statement on the matter, Professor B. Lown, cochairman of the international movement "International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War" [IPPNW] has sent a special message to M.S. Gorbachev.

In it the well-known U.S. academic and public figure writes that he fully shares the Soviet leader's concern in connection with the alarming and dramatic turn of events in the Persian Gulf zone. According to him, never before in history has one country been subjected to such an enormous quantity of explosive material in such a short time as Iraq today.

When a delegation from the IPPNW movement visited Iraq late in December its public health system was already in an utterly deplorable state. As a result of the adoption of economic sanctions this underdeveloped country was already incapable of providing treatment for the sick. Now the situation in this sphere is verging on the catastrophic. The majority of the casualties of the massive hostilities are children and young people.

The IPPNW movement has therefore called for an immediate humanitarian truce.

Addressing M.S. Gorbachev, as the main architect of the cessation of the cold war and a Nobel Prize winner, B. Lown asked the USSR President to back the initiative on declaring an humanitarian truce. The Soviet Union, his message stresses, can play a decisive role in the Security Council by calling for an immediate truce. It is absolutely essential now because, once extensive ground hostilities begin, the wave of violence and hatred will drown out the voice of reason and the human sense of compassion and the fine thread that keeps chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons from being used will be broken. That is why the UN Security Council must stop the hostilities as a matter of urgency. Only a peace based on true political, juridical, and moral order will bring justice and stability, the message points out.

Afghan Interviewed on Withdrawal Anniversary

LD1602192291 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1000 GMT 16 Feb 91

[Interview with Afghanistan President Najibullah by unidentified correspondent in Kabul on 15 February, the second anniversary of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan—Najibullah's comments are in Dari with superimposed Russian translation; recorded]

[Text] Esteemed President Najibullah, the Afghan people are celebrating the second anniversary of defending the motherland independently after the Soviet troops withdrawal from Afghanistan. In the last few years, the policy of national reconciliation has been successfully implemented politically, socially, economically, and culturally. Now, as we know, international cooperation with Afghanistan, especially the mutually beneficial economic relations between Afghanistan and USSR, are becoming an important factor of stability. We should like to know your opinion on this matter.

[Najibullah] First of all, I should like to say to you and all the Soviet television viewers that the policy of national reconciliation, the fourth anniversary of which we have recently celebrated, has opened up new possibilities in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres, as well as in international relations. Today, when we are on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and are celebrating this date as an important historic event, an opportunity has arisen to follow the course of the new thinking based on mutually beneficial cooperation with the Soviet Union and other neighboring countries within the framework of the policy of national reconciliation. Our foreign policy at present is based on living in peace with all neighbors. This situation fully corresponds to the new political thinking in international relations and symbolizes the end of the cold war period.

Regarding cooperation with Afghanistan, these relations have deep historical roots. The economic and trade relations between Afghanistan and its northern neighbor the Soviet Union are not confined to the post-revolutionary period, but stretch back even further. The economic and technical cooperation between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, especially for the last 50 years, occupies a major position in our country's economy. It is impossible to find a place on the economic map of Afghanistan where there are no signs of cooperation between our countries. To date, production of joint enterprises constitutes 60 percent of the volume of plant and 75 percent of industrial production in the government sector. With the help of the Soviet Union, 300 sites have been planned and built in Afghanistan, 150 of which have been commissioned. Trade between our countries has traditionally been developing and improving, and is taking on new dimensions.

The Republic of Afghanistan has embarked on the most important task of the policy of national reconciliation—reconstruction of the country's economy destroyed by

the war. In these conditions, the international help of the Soviet Union, as well as other foreign investments in our economy, have enormous importance. In recent years, as a result of the steps we have taken, the reconstruction of the Afghan economy has started in our country. Its aim is the country's revival from chaos and destruction. Naturally, the reconstruction of mutually beneficial relations with neighboring, and all other countries.

Afghanistan, as a country with enormous agricultural and natural potential, by using its resources will be able in future to repay the debts to her friends within the framework of international economic relations. The new political approaches of the leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan today create the opportunity for talking frankly about the necessity of improving the mutually beneficial relations with the Soviet Union. Real opportunities exist for widening the mutually beneficial economic relations between Afghanistan and the USSR. The presence of the huge-quality deposits of copper, bainite, iron, and dozens of other minerals in Afghanistan create favorable conditions for mutual profits. There are also possibilities for joint capital investments in the sphere of electricity production, creating joint agricultural enterprises, animal breeding, farming, and production of cotton on the Afghan and USSR lands along the banks of Amu-Darya which also guarantees mutual benefits for the sides.

Moreover, as a result of the government policy of the Republic of Afghanistan, the Afghan private entrepreneurs are now ready to invest tens of millions of dollars for opening joint and independent enterprises in the Soviet Union. There are possibilities for exporting to the USSR such goods and raw materials as wool, carpets, medicinal herbs, dry fruit, natural gas, and a number of other items for hundreds of millions of dollars. And, vice versa, the Afghan market is not only ready to accept the traditional Soviet goods, but to allow export of these goods via the Afghan market to the markets of the region. Widening the transit relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union plays an important role in improving the economic relations between the USSR and the countries of South Asia, especially with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and vice versa, the widening of transit between Asia and East Europe via the Soviet Union.

Afghan Mujahidin Chief Mas'ud Interviewed

PM1902093191 Moscow NEW TIMES in English No 6, 12-18 Feb 91 pp 36-38

[Text] This man is an enigma to many people. His struggle against Soviet troops in the Panjsher valley earned him fame as of one of the legendary mujahidin commanders. A truce was once reached between him and the Kabul-based Soviet military command, but after 18 months the Soviet side violated the cease-fire accord. Ahmad Shah Mas'ud believes that this spell of peace allowed him to consolidate the resistance movement in Afghanistan's North-East and later, after he withdrew from the Panjsher valley, in 13 northern provinces. He was harshly criticized by the leaders of what is now the Pakistan-based Afghan Opposition Government for his having made a deal with the Soviets. His group used to have armed clashes with other resistance groups and he was not seen in either Islamabad or Peshawar for twelve years. In the years of Soviet intervention he used to attract the attention of Soviet representatives in Kabul, while the Kabul government regarded him with caution and apprehension. It was easy to distinguish Ahmad Shah Mas'ud's people from other freedom fighters: many of them wore Soviet army uniforms bought on the Kabul market. Rumour has it that Ahmad Shah Mas'ud's representatives are actively buying flour in Kabul for the people living in the regions controlled by Mas'ud. Ahmad Shah Mas'ud is said to be one of the few mujahidin field commanders who are aware of their resonsibility before the people of Afghanistan. He is 37, married, and the father of a son.

The interviewer, Mohtar Hassan, heads the Pakistan Bureau of the Afghan press agency. Before emigrating to Pakistan, he spent several years in Kabul prisons for his opposition to the ruling regime's policies. He was held in solitary confinement at the Pote Charkhi, the Afghan security service prison. Last year Hassan acted as a mediator when he brought information to Moscow about four Soviet POW's held by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. One of the POW's—Aleksey Tikhonov—has returned home and the three others were allowed to correspond with their relations in the USSR.

The meeting of the field commander and the journalist took place in Pakistan where Ahmad Shah Mas'ud arrived at the end of last year to participate in a conference of field commanders and the Afghan Resistance leaders held under the framework of the Consultative Council (Shura).

[Mohtar Hassan] Your visit to Pakistan and your meeetings with the leaders of the Afghan resistance here are being treated as a part of consultations for an integrated strategy of an attack on Kabul. Has any plan for such an attack been elaborated?

[Ahmad Shah Mas'ud] A collective strategy has been devised not only for Kabul but for all cities and towns to dislodge Kabul administration wherever it has got its occupation. in my opinion, at this stage there is a need to conduct well-planned and integrated simultaneous attacks at more than one place. The beginning should be made from the points where the enemy is weakest. Kabul's attack is part of the ultimate programme and whenever conducive conditions exist Kabul would be attacked.

[Hassan] The Mujahidin have put an end to the occupation of the Soviet superpower in Afghanistan. But why have mujahidin not succeeded in throwing out the much weaker administration of Kabul?

[Mas'ud] In the past, when Soviet troops were operating in Afghanistan, the mujahidin were basically fighting a

defensive war. Their target was to render ineffective the Soviet war machine. We were basically fighting a guerilla war in which spending was limited. There were no problems of logistics. Heavy arms and ammunition were not required in great quantities. Now, the mujahidin are faced with new tasks and they have to play the role of an attacking force for which advanced preparation has not been made, either politically or militarily. I regret to say that although our Afghan leaders remained active over the last two years in Afghanistan they could not devise a proper political and military future strategy, and could not prepare themselves for the new phase. Without this preparation after the pullout of the Soviet troops the best opportunities and possibilities were wasted in short-term objectives. For example, the war at Jalalabad and Khowst rendered no result. The absence of a proper strategy against the enemy is the real source of concern for the field commanders. Each of them gathered the people in his area together and discussed the issue. As a result of such meetings several commanders from all over Afghanistan, including myself, gathered in the liberated area along Pak-Afghan borders. After detailed discussions, the commanders' meeting chalked out a political and military strategy. I am sure: if this is implemented as the Jihad leaders have agreed to the proposal, positive results will ensue.

[Hassan] Why have you not visited Pakistan over the last 12 years?

[Mas'ud] I was very busy there and I did not make up my mind to come over here, though my companions of Jihad all over Afghanistan and Pakistan kept on insisting that I visit Pakistan. Furthermore, our leader Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani directed me to come to Pakistan and consequently I decided to come here with the purpose of meeting the leaders of the Afghan Jihad and presenting my new programme to them. By the grace of Allah Almighty I had the opportunity to meet all such people during the few weeks of my stay in Pakistan and I presented my viewpoint to them. Most of them agreed to my proposals. Some leaders have their reservations.

[Hassan] What are their reservations?

[Mas'ud] For example, what should the qualities of the character of a commander be? I think, a commander should be introduced as having links with an organization or, if he had got the strength, then he could directly participate in the strategy. Similarly there were some matters relating to the training of the mujahidin.

[Hassan] Do you hope these matters will be sorted out?

[Mas'ud] These are minor things. The real strategy is that the mujahidin have to prepare themselves for coming out of the defensive position and entering the phase of an offensive posture. This principle has been accepted in total. We have to switch over to the offensive strategy to capture cities and towns for which the formation of regular armed forces is needed. All the commanders would have to raise an army. This is their responsibility.

[Hassan] Would there be a Commander-in-Chief in the case of forming an army?

[Mas'ud] The issue will be tackled by next spring when the meeting of commanders is held. For the time being Comamnder Moulawi Jelaluddin Haqqan [name as transliterated] has been assigned the task of keeping contact with commanders. This was decided by the consultative council of the commanders which I have mentioned earlier.

[Hassan] Do you feel the need of reconstituting the Afghan interim government?

[Mas'ud] The interim government in its present shape is unacceptable. There is a need to make it broad-based and various changes in its ministries and their work are required. If the leaders of the interim government to not find a way to change, then there could be another shura.

[Hassan] Are elections possible in the liberated areas of Afghanistan in the present situation?

[Mas'ud] Yes, they are. I think, in 13 provinces of Northern Afghanistan and in the central provinces of Parvan and Kapisa elections are possible. In this connection an agreement has been finalized with the Hezb-e Eslami (headed by Hikmatyar.- ed.)

[Hassan] What are the weak and strong points of the Najib administration?

[Mas'ud] The differences and rifts in the ranks of mujahidin are their biggest weakness, similarly, the serious rifts within the najib clique are their weak point. The Khalq and Parcham factions have their differences and the Parcham faction is further split by differences. In addition to this linguistic-based Sittam-e Meli party who are opposed to Pushtuns being Persian speaking operate in Afghanistan. [sentence as published] It is not possible for Najib to keep his administration intact as unity. [sentence as published] Besides, there are other factors. The Afghan masses have totally rejected the plan of national reconciliation presented by Najib. It should be remembered that the Najib clique have massacred over a million people. Another weak point of the Najib administration in the political field is its affiliation with the Soviet Union. I personally think that the Soviets do not want to prolong the war in Afghanistan to sustain the Najib administration. But whatever decision the Soviets make it would be an order and directive for the Najib administration.

The Najib regime has its strong points, however. One is that although it is a weak administration, it is a government and it has got central organization and authority. The help and assistance extended to it by the Soviets are beyond anyone's expectations. The Najib regime has the best modern weapons in its possession in sufficient quanitites, which is a remedy to its military weaknesses to a large extent, so much so that it has a superiority in arms over the Mujahidin. In addition to this, the factor

which has mostly benefitted the Najib regime, is the serious rifts in the ranks of the mujahidin.

[Hassan] The Soviets have a long experience of defence by remaining in the state of a siege which they learnt during the Second World War.... The same lesson now Soviets have taught to Najib. The Najib administration is in the state of seige in Kabul, Jalalabad, Qandahar, Herqat and other big cities and towns but its still surviving. What is your opinion?

[Mas'ud] The Soviet people and the armed forces were united against the invading external enemy. He the people are contending against the government troops and they are not strangers to each other.

Even from a purely military viewpoint your comparison is not correct. I have studied the seige of Leningrad to understand the war strategy. Your comparison is not in accordance with the real situation.

[Hassan] Today the world is aware of your great struggle. Little is known about how you joined the Afghan resistance, however.

[Mas'ud] (after some hesitation). When in 1973, Sardar Daud staged a coup d'etat with the help of the communists and the Soviet Union and took over the government in Afghanistan, I was studying in the second year of the Kabul Politechnical Institute. I had to go underground because of my Islamic ideas and spent six months in Afghanistan at different places. In the beginning of 1974, I came to Pakistan and then returned to Afghanistan. In the summer of 1975, we started an armed struggle in Panjsher with the help of some companions and liberated Rukheh, the centre of Panjsher valley, and the Hissa Awal [name as published] district. But obviously this occupation could not hqave been continued. I had to emigrate to Pakistan again. In April 1978, Taraki staged a coup d'etat and captured the government. After a few months I proceeded to Afghanistan and once again started armed resistance from Panjsher. We were a total of 30 in the valley. The arms and the materiel with which we started the Jihad included an automatic rifle G-3, five other rifles and nine guns. It means that out of 30, fifeen people were scantily armed.

On the way to Panhjsher two of us purchased two Kalashnikov rifles out of our own pocket. In Panjsher, our companions had arranged two RG-7 anti-tank rocket launchers but we have only seven shells and five thousand rounds.

Prof. Rabbani gave us a total of one lakh Afghanistan (about 12,000 rupees in Pakistani currency). With this preparaton we started Jihad from Panjsher.

Then after a few years it was the same Panjsher, where the Soviet Union in the presence of its mighty war machine, was compelled to arrive at an agreeement on ceasefire with us.

Well, the rest is history....

Sub-Saharan Africa

Commentary Views War Effect on Eritrean Rebels

EA1102145191 Moscow International Service in Amharic 1500 GMT 8 Feb 91

[Commentary by (Aleksandr Kirov)]

[Text] Among the countries and organizations that support Saddam Husayn's aggression in the Gulf is the Eritrean People's Liberation Front [EPLF], says our commentator, (Aleksandr Kirov), a member of the Institute of Western Studies, who has the following answer to the question of why this organization supports the hopeless act perpetrated by Saddam Husayn.

Unlike groups which solicit Syria's support or import oil and oil by-products, the EPLF used to rely solely on Iraqi support. It is to be recalled that Saddam Husayn has made great efforts to solicit groups who would support the ideals of the Ba'th party and the objectives of pan-Arabism as Iraq began to play the role of leader of the Arab world.

Since the EPLF managed to rout other opposition groups and scored victories in 1980 after waging a bloody civil war for many years in the country, its relations with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Arab monarchies turned sour. Saudi Arabia retaliated against the EPLF at the request of the Arab monarchies not long after the EPLF refused to be reconciled with other opposition groups that have conservative Islamic sentiments: In November 1983, Saudi warships seized and confiscated arms from a ship that was ferrying arms to the EPLF.

Six months later, the offices of EPLF representatives in Jeddah and other Saudi towns were closed. At that time, ADULIS, the EPLF organ, commented on the issue sternly and made it clear that it was opposed to the idea of self-sufficiency in arms. There was no improvement in relations between the EPLF and the Arab monarchies in the mid-eighties, but the EPLF's relations with Iraq were much closer than before.

The EPLF was among the first and the very few organizations to support Iraq's aggression against Kuwait and expressed their willingness to fight alongside the Iraqi Army. Even then, the EPLF leaders understood that Saddam Husayn's desire to annex Kuwait was unfounded and baseless. EPLF leader Tekle Beyne's interview in December 1990 with REUTER is good evidence of this. Tekle Beyene said that Iraq has invaded and colonized Kuwait in the same way that Ethiopia colonized Eritrea. The UN and the superpowers refuse to help us preserve their interests in the Gulf. Here, the EPLF's stand, which seemed to be fair, was only based on relations with oil-producing governments on the one hand and Saddam Husayn's regime in the name of [word indistinct].

Soon after the EPLF expressed its stand on Iraq's annexation of Kuwait, all Arab banks froze the EPLF's assets

and the organization found it difficult to make any kind of purchases. Due to the allied bombings of Iraq, the EPLF could not obtain any arms from Iraq. This has given a breather to the Ethiopian Government, which had been forced to fight on limited war fronts due to the problems of obtaining sufficient arms supplies following the changes in Eastern Europe.

A situation whereby there can be no victor through the use of arms has already been created. The EPLF, once it understood the situation, accepted the proposals from Great Britain and has agreed to start peace talks in London, according to reports. It is possible to say that the Ethiopian Government's decision to introduce economic reforms and the consequences of the Gulf war on the EPLF give hope that the two sides will reach an agreement.

RSA Leader Seeks End to ANC-SACP Links

MB2002095391 Moscow in Afrikaans to Southern Africa 1830 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Commentary by Aleksandr Fedorov—read by announcer]

[Text] When I heard this for the first time I began to have doubts about two issues. First, could the report have been mixed up by a press agency overloaded with work? Second, were they perhaps confusing the statement with that of some other person?

One would never have expected South African State President F.W. de Klerk, who always favors agreement among the country's political parties, to suddenly issue an ultimatum to the African National Congress [ANC] to break its alliance with the South African Comunist Party [SACP].

One could have expected such a demand from his predecessor, Mr. P.W. Botha, as the condition laid down by Botha to review his policy and even start dialogue with the ANC, was that the organization broke its links with the SACP.

President De Klerk has made the demand as though his speech of 2 February 1990 when the SACP and other ogranizations were unbanned never took place, and as though talks with the ANC on a new constitutional dispensation (?may be at risk).

Developments in the country are at present so stormy that it is difficult to [words indistinct], writes Aleksandr Fedovor. But it is not difficult to think back to the meeting which took place the previous week. At that meeting agreement was reached that the government would release political prisoners and allow political exiles to return to their fatherland, in exchange for which the ANC would suspend the armed struggle.

At the meeting Mr. De Klerk emphasized that the agreement would help the negotiation process in the future of the country, as many of the obstacles in the way of further negotiations had been removed. I do not think the SACP was excluded from the meeting. This is the organization of which Nelson Mandela, in his first speech after his release, said: I welcome the SACP because it has thrown its full weight behind the struggle for freedom. We are all delighted by the fact that the alliance between ourselves and this party remain as firm as ever.

Granted, President De Klerk only said it would be impossible to form an alliance with the ANC if communists are involved. But, according to him, that does not mean that agreement with the ANC, which plays a very important role in the negotiations, can (?not) be reached.

(?The linguistic) terminology and politically streamlined (?formulation) barely hides the real meaning behind the statement. The ANC is being advised to seek new friends.

I do not believe it is difficult to find the reason for this new, totally logical, and decidedly unconstructive statement by the state president during his television appearance, Aleksandr Fedorov continues. It is probably the storm of protest from the Conservative Party and other far-right organizations over the president's proposal to repeal the three key apartheid laws.

Mr. De Klerk also emphasizes that the government supports the principle of power-sharing, as a winner-takes-all system would inevitably lead to the oppression of the white minority by the black majority.

Although these days the tendency is to portray the South African state president as the power behind the democratic winds now blowing through the country, one must not forget his background or the forces which brought him to power. They are apparently not ecstatic about the fact that the SACP, which was hounded with particular brutality after its banning in 1950, has not vanished or lost any of its popularity, just as its slogans have not changed. The power of the SACP can be judged by the growth in its membership.

I am afraid, says Aleksandr Fedorov, that I will again be branded as a communist agitator of Soviet agents in South Africa. This is all the more so as it is currently fashionable to criticize communists, even though they admit their own faults. In South Africa comunists are accused of arming themselves with new terminology in order to conceal their true intentions.

I am sure that, following De Klerk's television speech, many people are beginning to wonder who is the one trying to conceal his true intentions.

Ambassador Appointed to Sao Tome and Principe

PM2002084591 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Feb 91 Union Edition p 6

[Unattributed report under the general heading "Chronicle"]

[Text] The USSR President has appointed Sergey Yakovlevich Sinitsyn USSR ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Sao Tome and Principe.

East Europe

Gulf Crisis Leads to Terrorism Scare in CSFR

91UF0469A Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 12 Feb 91 First Edition p 3

[Article by A. Shapovalov: "Czechoslovakia: Looking for a Black Cat"]

[Text] Prague—From time to time a helicopter circles over Prague, there are reinforced patrols on the streets and the embassies of the United States, Britain, France, Israel, and other countries confronting the Iraqi aggression are guarded more tightly. Extraordinary vigilance at railroad terminals, nuclear power stations, and other facilities of paramount importance—this is the appearance of Czechoslovakia, which has adopted stepped-up precautionary measures against possible provocations, today. An interdepartmental security headquarters has been formed and is operating with precision. The circumspection and caution are not without foundation: Saddam Husayn, it was noted at a recent news conference, did not care for the dispatch to Saudi Arabia of chemical warfare protection subunits of the CSFR [Czech and Slovak Federal Republic] nor for a number of statements by President V. Havel. Terrorist acts, it was hinted, could not be ruled out....

There has been no change in the situation in Czechoslovakia as of the start of combat operations in the Persian Gulf, J. Ruml, a leader of the security headquarters and first deputy interior minister of the CSFR, declared on television recently. No special incidents have been recorded, a TASS correspondent reports for SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA.

Reason only for rejoicing, one would have thought. But no, the deputy minister called, on the contrary, for people to be even more vigilant, which is logical. What is hard to understand is something else—the sources from which he indicated a threat could emanate. "The Interior Ministry," he said, "should not lose sight of the possibility of a stimulation, for example, of the forces of the former totalitarian regime or a certain movement of foreign forces on Czechoslovak territory. It cannot be overlooked that we are at the present time threatened by the state terrorism of the Soviet Armed Forces, which, given certain efforts, could destabilize the situation in the former countries of the communist dictatorship."

Ruml reported that the security headquarters was engaged in an analysis of the situation both in Czechoslovakia itself and in neighboring states, primarily in Poland, the USSR and Germany, from the viewpoint of the presence of Soviet forces on their territory. A scenario of possible situations has been developed. As of Friday additional measures will be adopted at border control and crossing points, and entry and exit control has been intensified.

In an interview with CTK P. Kulan, member of the CSFR Federal Assembly, noted the need for "better armament of the border units on the border with the USSR and a comprehensive improvement in their rear support." It is necessary also, he believes, to resolve more quickly the question of the creation of a "firm infrastructure for the protection of state borders on a professional basis from the ranks of inhabitants of the border localities conversant with local conditions."

It has been announced in the press also that the Czechoslovak-Soviet border, whose length is 97 km or 2.6 percent of the total length of the CSFR border, is being vigorously reinforced at this time. As of today 10 percent of the entire border forces personnel has already been brought up here.

As happens repeatedly, there has somehow now in Czechoslovakia been a substitution of concepts, and public attention has been reprofiled toward the state terrorism of the Soviet Armed Forces and invasion from outside. A deft maneuver, there is no denying. Not only the deputy minister, incidentally, has been involved in whipping up the threat on the part of Soviet forces in recent days. M. Zantovsky, press spokesman for the Czechoslovak president, told journalists recently, the CSFR has no cause for exaggerated fears concerning the fact that the USSR could terminate the withdrawal of forces from the CSFR. Nonetheless, he pointed out, we are monitoring the situation.

The hints are all the more astonishing in that it was in recent weeks that there was in Prague a meeting of Czechoslovak and Soviet members of legislature and the Federal Assembly heard the announcement by M. Kotsab, chairman of the legislative Commission for Monitoring the Withdrawal of Soviet Forces From the CSFR, who emphasized that it was being carried out to the letter, ahead of schedule even, and that the last operational units would leave Czechoslovakia by 26 February of this year.

But some people are evidently interested in inciting fear and in looking for a black cat in a dark room, as they say, and are endeavoring to create an "enemy image". To what end? Some people are inclined to attach no particular importance to this, giving as the reason for their position the fact that 1968 and everything connected with it are still alive in the memory of many Czechs and Slovaks. Such a premise is understood, but members of parliament themselves have emphasized that it is impossible to live while constantly facing the past and that it is necessary to think about the future also. There is nothing to the digression into the past, perhaps? The incitement of fear is, possibly, merely an attempt to distract public attention from the difficult domestic political problems, primarily the start of realization of the radical economic reform, the transition to free prices and other measures,

which have in recent days considerably exacerbated the sociopolitical situation in Czechoslovakia.

Deputy Addresses Role in CSFR Velvet Revolution

91UF0449A Moscow LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in Russian No 5, 6 Feb 91 p 1

[Report by LITERATURNAYA GAZETA correspondent V. Moyev, followed by interview with V. Alksnis, deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet, by unidentified interviewer; place and date not given: "Colonel Alksnis 'Exposes'"]

[Text] The sensational statement for Swedish television by V. Alksnis, deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet, has extensively done the rounds of the Czechoslovak press. The colonel, as is known, revealed the notorious "hand of Moscow" not in events of the past, among which was, say, the commitment of forces to Czechoslovakia in 1968, but in the latest newsreel. He maintained that the demonstrations in the course of the Czechoslovak revolution had been directed from the Soviet Embassy and that the revolutionary Civic Forum, which united around itself broad masses and which headed the changes, was allegedly financed from our side.

At a news conference convened in the wake of this news, representatives of Civic Forum most emphatically rejected Alksnis' fabrication as unsubstantiated and senseless. The Czechoslovak public views it as a clumsy attempt to insult the victory prepared and accomplished by the Czechoslovak people. As emphasized at the news conference, Civic Forum is studying possible ways of instituting legal proceedings against V. Alksnis.

Vladimir Zelezny, press spokesman for Civic Forum, observed that the underlying meaning of Alksnis' speech was an endeavor to divert the Soviet public's attention from the acute internal problems.

Jan Petranek, a leading Czechoslovak commentator who has worked in Moscow for many years, said in our discussion:

"I believe that the colonel's speech should be evaluated on its merits primarily by the democratic forces in the Soviet Union. A rebuff of the conservative forces, which Alksnis represents, on the part of all democrats is important.

...But Proof—Later

Having received this notice from Prague, we decided to seek direct clarification from V. Alksnis.

[LITERATURNAYA GAZETA] Do you have specific evidence of the Soviet Embassy's involvement in what happened in Czechoslovakia?

[Alksnis] It was not they who organized these events, of course. But that they were involved in these things to a large extent is true. I insist on a legislative inquiry. This does not require much—the formation of a USSR Supreme Soviet commission with access to the archives of just three organizations—the Foreign Ministry, the KGB, and the CPSU Central Committee. That is, it is essential that we open up the ironclad rooms of these three departments, and all would fit into place. I am advocating this version of a solution. If it turns out that the safes of these three highly esteemed organizations contain nothing of the sort.... No, let us wait for the commission. I have names.

[LITERATURNAYA GAZETA] Could you not name them now?

[Alksnis] I do not want to do anything yet, I am waiting for a step from the other side. The point being that I announced this for the first time two months ago.

[LITERATURNAYA GAZETA] So you have documents?

[Alksnis] I will tell you once more—I have certain facts concerning the "velvet revolution" in East Europe and I will insist on a legislative inquiry.

[LITERATURNAYA GAZETA] Now two words about your charges against the president in connection with the events in the Baltic.

[Alksnis] I will confirm once again the position I expressed in ARGUMENTY I FAKTY: The president was party to the events that unfolded there, which were connected with the public salvation committees. If this is not the case, it would be altogether astonishing that the president of a great country does not know what is happening in the country, or the general secretary does not know what is happening in the party.

[LITERATURNAYA GAZETA] That is, he is party to anticonstitutional actions?

[Alksnis] Ask Gorbachev himself about this. Meanwhile, I repeat what I said in ARGUMENTY I FAKTY: This is sufficient for the time being. V. Ignatenko, the president's press spokesman, declared at a briefing that I would obviously disavow my words. I confirm once again what I stated in ARGUMENTY I FAKTY and occupy the same position today. [interview ends]

FROM THE EDITORS: Is the colonel not too dashing? We already know of two well-known investigators who have leveled a heap of formidable charges at the leadership of the country, but who have left the proof for later. How and why this is being done is now clear.

Are you not repeating this move?

Petrovskiy Receives Yugoslav Ambassador in Moscow

LD1902130291 Moscow TASS in English 1228 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Moscow February 19 TASS—Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovskiy received Yugoslav Ambassador to the USSR Milan Veres on Monday.

The ambassador informed Petrovskiy of a meeting held by 16 non-aligned foreign ministers in Belgrade on February 11-12 in connection with combat operations in the Gulf.

The Soviet side praised moves made by the non-aligned movement towards a political and diplomatic settlement of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti conflict and described Soviet diplomatic contacts with states in the region.

Petrovskiy pointed to the importance of mutual efforts aimed at the earliest possible end of the Gulf war and establishing firm and equal security in the Middle East.

West Europe

Bessmertnykh Attends Council of Europe Talks

Arrives in Madrid 20 Feb

LD2002205791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1940 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Rovert Serebrennikov]

[Text] Madrid, 20 February (TASS)—USSR Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh arrived in Madrid tonight. He will take part in a special session of the committee of ministers of the Council of Europe. Representatives of countries who are not members of this consultative and political organization, which unites 24 states of the European continent, have been invited to attend it.

Meetings and conversations will be held between the leaders of the Soviet Foreign Policy Department and Spanish official representatives, as well as meetings with foreign ministers of some West European countries which are taking part in the work of the session.

Spanish Media Report Visit

WA2102151091

For reportage on the visit by Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh to Spain during which he will give a letter from Soviet President Gorbachev to Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, be received by Spanish King Don Juan Carlos, and attend the meeting of the Council of Europe during which Czechoslovakia will become a member of the Council, please see the Spain section of the 21 Febuary West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Reports Note Previous Council of Europe Session

Soviet Delegation Attends

LD1302100891 Moscow TASS in English 0923 GMT 13 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Dmitriy Knab]

[Text] Paris February 13 TASS—A working group from the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe for developing contacts and intergovernmental cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Council of Europe held its regular meeting in Strasbourg from February 11 to 12. A programme for specific functions in 1991 was agreed upon.

Ambassador Yuriy Deryabin, head of the Soviet delegation, handed over to Catherine Lalumiere, secretary-general of the Council of Europe, an official letter from Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh. The letter documents Soviet participation in three more European conventions: on information about foreign legislation, on prevention of violence and rowdiness by spectators during sports functions, specifically football matches, and against doping in sports.

Deryabin took part in a meeting of the committee of ministers of the council of Europe at the level of ambassador-representatives for foreign ministers of the 24 member-countries.

Envoy Submits Bessmertnykh Letter

LD1302000991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1755 GMT 12 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Dmitriy Knab]

[Text] Paris, 12 Feb (TASS)—A routine meeting of the joint working party from the USSR Foreign Ministry and the Council of Europe Secretariat on developing contacts and intergovernmental cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Council of Europe took place in Strasbourg 11-12 February. A program of specific events for 1991 was agreed.

Ambassador Yu. S. Deryabin, the head of the Soviet delegation, handed C. Lalumiere, secretary general of the Council of Europe, an official letter from USSR Foreign Minister A.A. Bessmertnykh about the Soviet Union's accession to three more European conventions: on information about foreign legislation; on preventing violence and hooliganism by spectators during sporting events, particularly soccer matches; and on preventing the use of drugs in sport.

Yu. S. Deryabin attended a sitting of the committee of ministers of the Council of Europe at the level of ambassador representatives of the foreign ministers of the organization's 24 member states.

Lukyanov Meets Visiting Council of Europe Delegation

PM1802140991 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 16 Feb 91 Second Edition p 6

[TASS report under general heading: "Official Reports"]

[Text] On 15 February, A.I. Lukyanov, chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, met in the Kremlin with a delegation from the Council of Europe Parliamentary

Assembly headed by A. Bjoerck, the assembly president, which is in the Soviet Union.

During the talk, which took place in a friendly atmosphere, there was an examination of questions of consolidating ties between the Soviet Union and the Council of Europe through parliamentary and intergovernmental channels in the interests of maintaining stability and cooperation in Europe.

Special emphasis was placed on the important role of the legislatures of the CSCE states in continuing the Helsinki process and the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's readiness to become the basis for an all-European legislative forum.

Representatives of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly were informed, at their request, of the development of the situation in the Baltic and the measures which are being taken to stabilize it.

USSR People's Deputy A.A. Denisov took part in the talk.

The delegation also had a meeting with I.D. Laptev, chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet's Soviet of the Union.

European Reports on Persian Gulf Crisis Continue

U.S. Deployments in Turkey Eyed

PM2002144191 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 16 Feb 91 First Edition p 5

[Article by A. Pavlov: "Persian Gulf: War on Our Doorstep"]

[Text] Events in the Persian Gulf, whose development is followed by hundreds of millions of people with bated breath, are becoming increasingly threatening in nature. Thousands of Iraqi civilians have become victims of the many days of bombing, and the firing on cities in Israel and Saudi Arabia continues. The fires in the Kuwaiti oil fields and the discharge of oil into the waters of the Persian Gulf are fraught with unpredictable consequences for the planet.

So far the brunt of the war has been borne by the United States, whose troops form the bulk of the multinational forces, and Iraq. It cannot be ruled out that the number of countries directly involved in the conflict could grow. Thus the Israeli Government reserves the right to take retaliatory action over the missile attacks on its cities. Iran is categorically opposed to the consolidation of the American military presence in the region. Events are developing in such a way that Turkey could become a participant in the armed conflict.

As foreign news agencies point out, you can find "hotheads" in Turkish political and military circles who want to exploit the present situation to revive Turkey's historical claims to Iraq's oil-rich northern provinces (Kirkuk and Mosul). They could try to get support for their plans inside the country by claiming that the incorporation of Kirkuk and Mosul will enable Turkey to considerably increase its economic potential.

Is it necessary to remind people what war coming right up to the Soviet border will mean for us in that event? A war in which, as can be judged by foreign press reports, chemical, bacteriological, and even nuclear weapons might be used.

I would like to believe that it will not come to that and that Ankara, which is renowned for its strong schooling in diplomacy and political perspicacity, will manage to keep clear of involvement in the conflict with Iraq. At the same time, the fact that a group of American military—who, moreover, are expecting reinforcements—recently arrived at the NATO base of Erzurum near the USSR border is bound to cause anxious thoughts. What are American servicemen doing on the border with the Soviet Union at a time when American military actions against Iraq are gathering momentum? Do the American political and military leadership not realize that the Soviet Union cannot regard such reports with indifference?

Gorbachev, Mitterrand Share Views

LD2102101291 Moscow TASS in English 1007 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Moscow February 21 TASS—This morning Mikhail Gorbachev and Francois Mitterrand, in the spirit of the relationship of trust and frankness that has evolved between them, exchanged views on the current state and possible consequences of the Gulf conflict.

Gorbachev said he was expecting a reply from Baghdad later Thursday.

French Role Seen as 'Important'

LD2102081191 Moscow TASS in English 0730 GMT 21 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Aleksandr Krivykh]

[Text] Paris February 21 TASS—Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, who met with French President Francois Mitterrand here on Wednesday, said after the conversation that Iraq's answer to the Soviet peace inintiative for the settlement of the Gulf crisis should be waited until the next day. Answering questions from reporters, he emphasised that Iraq should give a clear answer to the latest Soviet proposals. He believed that a peaceful settlement of the conflict was still possible. It was only necessary to wait until the evening of the next day.

The minister said that Iran and France were determined to put an end to this "devastating war". He said that the views of Tehran and Paris of the conflict were "similar". Velayati believes France must play an important role in the settlement of the crisis.

French Minister Supports Aiding Soviet Reforms

PM2102094791 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 16 Feb 91 First Edition p 5

[Article by TASS correspondent S. Batyrev: "Read in LE FIGARO: Chaos Is Sole Threat to Democracy"]

[Text] Paris—In the present situation the West should continue supplying aid to and developing all-around cooperation with the USSR and the countries of East Europe. This idea was expressed by Elizabeth Guigou, minister delegate to the French Foreign Ministry for European affairs, in an interview in the newspaper LE FIGARO.

Asked by the correspondent whether the USSR should be trusted and economic aid to it continued after the events in the Baltic, Guigou stated that in the USSR, as in the East European countries, democracy is threatened above all by chaos. "That is why, in my opinion, we should not wait until the process of democratization is accomplished and only then start to act. If we do that we run the risk of being too late." Western aid, in Guigou's opinion, "now remains the sole means which can promote movement in the right direction." Here the main attention should be paid to humanitarian aid and technical assistance, since the first is focused directly on the population and the second makes it possible to transfer essential technology.

"It is normal to link financial aid to clear commitments on the implementation of financial reforms, in my opinion, since it is essential to avoid the squandering of resources," Guigou went on. "However, making the completion of political reforms a sine qua non of aid is a highly subjective matter and consequently far more contentious. I sincerely believe that the more aid we give, the greater the chances of strengthening democracy."

Agreement Signed on Use of FRG Airspace

LD1802234291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1745 GMT 18 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Igor Osinskiy]

[Text] Berlin, 18 Feb (TASS)—An agreement was signed in Strausberg near Berlin today on the procedure for use by Soviet troops of airspace above the territory where they are stationed in the FRG. It gives specific expression to the relevant clauses of the 12 October 1990 treaty between the USSR and FRG on conditions for the temporary stationing and systematic withdrawal of Soviet troops from the territory of the FRG.

The document which was signed regulates issues concerning the guaranteeing of air security, and issues which touch upon the interests not only of military and civilian aircraft but also those of the entire population living in eastern Germany. A considerable reduction in noise levels is envisaged, as is the creation in the region of a more favorable economic situation.

The signing of the new agreement was preceded by a meeting between Colonel General M.P. Burlakov, commander in chief of the Western Group of Forces, and Lieutenant General J. Schoenbohm, commander of the Bundeswehr Ost Territorial group of forces. The meeting discussed various issues concerning cooperation in the systematic withdrawal of Soviet Troops from the FRG territory.

Gorbachev, Kohl Telephone Conversation Noted

LD2002184891 Moscow TASS in English 1825 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl today continued their telephone conversation.

Gorbachev commented on some aspects of the USSR's domestic situation that interested Kohl.

They discussed issues connected with processes in Eastern Europe.

The two leaders exchanged views on a possible settlement of the Gulf crisis.

French Business Said to Lack Confidence in USSR

PM1402171791 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 14 Feb 91 Union Edition p 4

[Report by correspondent Yu. Kovalenko: "Deficit Growing, Confidence Falling; Results of Soviet-French Commission Session"]

[Text] Paris—The Paris session of the Soviet-French Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Industrial, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation has taken place under the sign of serious concern on the part of the French authorities and business circles over the situation in the Soviet Union and the state of bilateral relations.

The danger exists, above all, that the recent decisions adopted in the economic sphere in the USSR could interrupt the process of transition to the market, Pierre Beregovoy, French minister of economy, finance, and budget, emphasized at the meeting. This, in the opinion of Paris, would do irreparable harm to the Soviet economy.

Numerous bilateral agreements signed by the two states in 1990 still have to be implemented. In the opinion of the French side, the chief positive results of last year are scientific and technical cooperation and the training of Soviet specialists in France. On the whole, however, P. Beregovoy emphasized, the overall outcome of the two countries' trade and economic ties in 1990 is unsatisfactory.

French exports to the USSR last year, in Paris' estimate, fell 25 percent (this related primarily to chemical and steelmaking industry output and agricultural products), whereas imports from the USSR increased 9 percent.

France's deficit in trade with us almost doubled during the year—from 5.8 to 10 billion francs [Fr].

Employers are concerned, the minister said, that the contracts that were signed are not being fulfilled and that payment times are not being observed. The situation is also exacerbated by the uncertainty connected with Soviet legislation with regard to foreign capital investments. Local business circles voice concern that the agreement to encourage and protect capital investments, which was signed with the USSR recently, has still not been ratified by the USSR Supreme Soviet.

French industrialists, it was pointed out at the commission session, would like to understand the essence of our legislation relating to foreign investments and joint ventures. Many businessmen are alarmed at the nature of the recent presidential decrees on the activities of joint ventures.

Are our partners not laying it on a bit thick? Hardly, commentators believe. But the Soviet side, to judge from the speech in Paris by L.A. Voronin, head of the Soviet delegation, assesses the present situation somewhat differently, and more optimistically.

"Of course, uncertainty as to the fate of our economy is restraining French entrepreneurs," L.A. Voronin said in conversation with your correspondent. "Nevertheless, we have received considerable credits for grain and also for joint ventures—approximately 100 million rubles. True, there is one other complex question. We would like to obtain from France along state lines an additional credit of a further Fr5 billion (in addition to the Fr5 billion recently obtained) for the development of the oil and gas industry. Minister P. Beregovoy did not give a negative reply but asked for the resolution of this question to be postponed for a while."

L.A. Voronin pointed to the successful course of the talks with the French ELF Aquitaine and Total oil companies on prospecting for and extracting natural minerals in the USSR. An agreement on additional purchases of 3 million tonnes of grain was signed in Paris during these days.

The Paris meeting resolved a number of problems with regard to setting up a venture in Moscow jointly with the Thomson Company to produce 600,000 color television sets a year. Another joint venture being set up with the French firm of Seribo [name as transliterated] will manufacture furniture. An agreement has also been reached on the construction in the USSR of two printed circuit board plants with the use of French technology.

With the help of French technology, L.A. Voronin told me, Krasnoyarsk's "Polet" Association is increasing production of washing machines to 800,000 a year. It also intends to expand production of compressors for refrigerators—to 1 million a year. An agreement has been concluded to lay the first fiber optics communications line across Lake Baykal.

As for cooperation between the Gorkiy Motor Vehicle Plant and the Peugeot firm, which IZVESTIYA has written about repeatedly, L.A. Voronin assured me that it is continuing. The president and managing director of that company recently visited the USSR. Technical and economic calculations have been made. Last year Peugeot tested its latest model—the 605—in our country and confirmed its opinion of the possibility of producing it there.

Despite all the difficulties, the bilateral "Plan-Market" group is continuing its work. It is headed on the French side by L. Stoleru, secretary of state for questions of the plan. Its purpose is to assist our country in the transition to the market.

The results of our trade and economic ties at present do not put us in an optimistic frame of mind, P. Beregovoy pointed out, and the situation must be rectified urgently. If French enterprises see that the difficulties which the USSR is encountering can be eliminated, they are ready to expand their presence on our market. Otherwise we run the risk of losing the confidence of our oldest partners once and for all and, together with this, the credits that we need so badly now.

Supreme Soviet

Supreme Soviet Issues Resolution on Yeltsin

LD2002173891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1622 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS legislative correspondent Ivan Ivanov: "USSR Supreme Soviet Adopts Resolution on Yeltsin Interview"]

[Excerpts] Moscow 20 February (TASS)—The tenets and calls contained within yesterday's central television appearance by Boris Yeltsin, chairman of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Supreme Soviet, that were targetted at replacing the country's legitimately elected supreme organs of power and at the immediate resignation of the USSR president "run counter to the USSR constitution and create an emergency situation in the country." This is stated in the resolution on the Russian leader's television interview passed today by the USSR Supreme Soviet. In the final version, the deputies slightly altered the wording of the document adopted as a basis on which to work, recalling that Yeltsin spoke not of "scrapping" power, but of "replacing" it.

In the resolution, the country's legislature calls on the Russian Supreme Soviet, the Federation Council, and the USSR president to "determine their attitude" toward this speech of Boris Yeltsin.

The USSR Supreme Soviet appealed to the peoples of the country, the republican parliaments, all levels of local soviets of people's deputies, and all political and public parties and movements to "consolidate their efforts to stabilize the political and economic situation throughout the country, intensify the democratic principles in the restructuring of Soviet society, and support to the hilt the legitimately elected supreme organs of power and the USSR president."

As distinct from the morning discussions, in the evening the legislature heard people speak in support of the position of Boris Yeltsin. An engineer from Orenburg, Vyacheslav Shapovalenko, did not go along with those people who "see in Boris Yeltsin the root of all evil." The deputy spoke against "attempts to discredit Boris Yeltsin," claiming that by so doing the members of the USSR Supreme Soviet are "insulting not only the head of Russia's parliament, but also the people of Russia."

[Moscow TASS in English at 1557 GMT on 20 February carries a similar report on the Supreme Soviet resolution on Boris Yeltsin's televised remarks, noting that the resolution was passed with a vote of 292 in favor, 29 opposed, and 27 abstentions]

Deputies Assess Yeltsin TV Interview

LD2002193191 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 0900 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Speeches by USSR Supreme Soviet Deputies Lemesheva, Yusupov, Kustarev, Umarkhodzhayev, Azarov, Mamedov, Sharipov, Denisov, Fomenko, and Chekhoyev, with remarks and interjections by USSR Supreme Soviet Chairman Lukyanov at the USSR Supreme Soviet morning session at the Kremlin on 20 February, concerning the 19 February Moscow Television interview granted by RSFSR President Boris Yeltsin; from the "At the USSR Supreme Soviet" program]

[Excerpts] [Lukyanov] Well, as always, the procedure: I have a lot of messages here, the first is from Nataliya Vasilyevna Lemesheva. Comrades, I will give the floor to everybody who wants to speak. All I ask is that you be brief.

[Lemesheva] Esteemed people's deputies: The anxiety and pain of the whole country is evident as our people watch the tragic ethnic and social conflicts that have broken out in separate regions. The blood of innocent people is being shed in these areas. Who is to blame? What can be done? We ask ourselves these agonizing questions as we search for a way out of the crisis. When, at the session, we consider conflicts that arise we are afraid of a carelessly spoken word: What if it will intensify this fire, what if this flame will engulf the whole country? During this critical time, calls for war, not peace are heard throughout the country. In this way, and only in this way, can I evaluate the television speech made by the head of the supreme body of power of Russia, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. What we heard and saw yesterday evening on television could be regarded as a bad dream, but now, no matter how many times this person tries to persuade us that he is wrongly understood, that he simply was thinking aloud, is not true—venomous seeds of discord and destruction have been thrown into people's hearts. The only hope is the sober mind of our people of labor, the traditional ties of internationalist fraternity of our peoples. I think it is my duty to appeal to all people, especially to farm laborers in the countryside, where I worked for 22 years. In the countryside, people suffer most from political games; they must be warned of the danger that could stem from the Russian chairman's remarks.

I think it is my duty to appeal to the Russian legislators to respond without delay to the inflammatory statement of the chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, to stop the hand raised against democracy and perestroyka.

[Lukyanov] Comrade Yusupov has entered his name. Microphone four.

[Yusupov] Yesterday's speech by Boris Nikolayevich has aroused the indignation of us all. It was an obvious display of sore ambitions and a claim to power. It was an obvious symptom of short- sightedness, the complete absence of any political wisdom and sense of responsibility in this most complicated period of our history. Therefore I want our legislature to express its condemnation. After all, people are fed up with all these demagogical speeches; we have to work, to stabilise the situation, but Yeltsin's speech yesterday, his call on the people to demand Gorbachev's resignation, I think was

irresponsible, was just another provocation. If it is a matter of Gorbachev resigning, then we must (?raise the question of) Yeltsin' resigning. After all, when squires bicker, both the country and the people suffer. Therefore I want our parliament to take a firm stand regarding this totally irresponsible statement. [passage omitted]

[Lukyanov] Comrade Kustarev, please.

[Kustarev] Esteemed comrade deputies: I have always had great respect for Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. I have always listened to his speeches with interest, both as a Russian and a Soviet citizen.

I believe that until yesterday we nurtured the illusion that we would somehow manage to find points of contact; that somehow we would find those points which touched, despite our differences. But yesterday's appearance by the chairman of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] Supreme Soviet showed us that thee are no such points of contact. No, I cannot say there are any! I still hope they will appear. The Soviet people—and I have met my electorate about 16 times—tell me that they are weary of politics. They are weary of the political intrigue, the constant attempts to stoke up tension and provoke clashes. Yes, comrades, all the clashes have been provoked. Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's interview makes clear what he is against: He is against a renewed union of sovereign states; he is against a reasonable and sensible division of remits and powers between the central and the republican institutions of power. Comrades, Boris Nikolayevich himself has claimed in his speeches to support the Union! He has spoken in favor of a delimitation of remits. [passage omitted]

I believe, and I believe firmly, that the Supreme Soviet cannot express its attitude to what happened yesterday. I support the previous speakers, and say, comrades, let us adopt an appeal. An appeal not simply to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, but to us, the Soviet people of our country. Thank you for your attention.

[Lukyanov] Comrade Umarkhodzhayev, please. Comrade Azarov.

[Umarkhodzhayev] Esteemed members of the USSR Supreme Soviet: The future of our state, if I may be frank, is in danger. The confrontation between the leaders of many republics and the central leadership has reached a state of emergency. We must not be indifferent; we cannot be neutral bystanders, watching what is going on in our republics and our country. We, USSR people's deputies, bear as much, if not more, responsibility to our peoples and electorates as the other republican deputies. Yesterday's television appearance by Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, the leader of our leading Union republic, confirms the overt confrontation between the republics and the center—and the president. This is leading to further deterioration in the political, economic, and interethnic climate in our country.

In this connection, I would put forward the following proposal and would ask you to support it. Because we cannot get away with just a message to parliament, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, or anyone else, we must immediately set up a roundtable meeting between all the leaders of the republics, under the chairmanship of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and examine all the disagreements between the republics and the leaders. A general consensus must be found. We are not just talking about Russia; we are talking about the leaders of many other republics, because there is still no consensus between the republics and the center—Boris Nikolayevich has said this openly—but there are republics where everything is going on implicitly. Therefore, I propose that we, the Supreme Soviet, must not remain a mere bystander, as we have been these past two years, and we must not limit ourselves to a message to the people or parliament, but instead, we must act. That is why I am making this proposal.

[Lukyanov] Comrade Azarov, please.

[Azarov] Estemmed Supreme Soviet. I am not a member of the Supreme Soviet, (?but) a people's deputy. Yesterday we held a plenum of the oblast [not further identified] Council of Veterans of War, Labor, and the Armed Forces. [passage omitted] We all agreed that we want to live in a law-based state, in a state where law should rule, and not a personality. So Boris Nikolayevich's words yesterday to Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, to conservative forces, and to the USSR Supreme Soviet are, I think, unacceptable (?from) a leader of our state. So, what is essential now is not antagonism between the USSR Supreme Soviet and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. I think the main thing is to unite our efforts and direct them at organizing perestroyka. Those who went though the Great Fatherland War know that we have nothing to hope for from any foreign uncle; neither the Americans nor anyone else will help us. During the war I was wounded six times, and I know that we fought in our own tanks, we fought with our own weapons, and we ate our own bread; now we must understand that it is only our work that can help us solve this perestroyka.

I personally consider his statement on 13 January in the Baltic republics with the leaders of the other Baltic republics as treachery toward his own people, and his address yesterday as a real call for civil war—unforgivable in a leader who is striving for the post of head of our state.

[Lukyanov] Right, Comrade Mamedov has the floor. Next to speak is Comrade Sharipov.

[Mamedov] Frankly speaking, I was saddened and angered by the Television appearance of Comrade Yeltsin, chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet.

I believe that what our country and all the peoples of our great motherland need most is unity, trust in one another, and renunciation of any confrontation. But when an attempt is made to justify all one's steps, when

an attempt is made to justify the mistaken step that was taken by the erstwhile deputy chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, Filshin, and when someone says that God can see how he has tried to work with others, yet at the same time has not let up on the confrontation even for an hour, but has instead always tried to level unjustified, and even sometimes slanderous criticism at the policy of the Soviet Government, then permit me, comrades, to say that it is nothing short of a direct antipopular policy, a policy which is pushing our people toward the brink.

I would like to cite one fact: The fact of the matter is that the most diverse forces have come from all quarters to unite together. I am angered that Yeltsin and Aliyev are travelling in the same car. Today, Aliyev uses the same words against Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, and demands his resignation.

I would like to address all the people of the country, but first and foremost the Russians, in the same words that Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin uses when addressing them: Yes, listen carefully. Draw the correct conclusions. Understand things properly. Do all you can to put an end to confrontation. Seek to ensure that our peoples unite around the Russian people, and that we rid ourselves of confrontation, and of all that is pushing the people and the country toward the precipice. Thank you for your attention.

[Lukyanov] Deputy Sharipov, please.

[Sharipov] Esteemed members of the Supreme Soviet, esteemed people's deputies, esteemed members of the government: I would like to talk about to what ambition can drive a person—a normal person, when all is said and done—and to what extent a person can lose touch with reality. How, in these issues, can our democratic press of today help a person, if he is of an unstable nature? When I listened to Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's speech, I, as a leader, understood that absolutely everything disturbs him. He was disturbed by the government of Ryzhkov, whom you and I here appointed. He is already being disturbed by the Cabinet of Ministers, which has not yet been formed, right? It is already disturbing him! He is disturbed by absolutely everything and everyone. He has a great many problems, and when a person has a lot of problems he himself becomes a problem. In his speech he probably became such a problem, not only for the Russian parliament and the Russian people; today he became a problem for the whole of our country. [passage omitted]

We need to think about how to feed and how to clothe our electorate. After all, they believed in us and, what is more, with such faith, like a redeemer of the fatherland, they looked like this upon Comrade Yeltsin. Is that not so? But how easy it is to deceive the people! Who is this man who, after disappointing the people so much, has reached such a state that he is now violating the USSR Constitution and calling for a coup. An ordinary deputy of the Union is not even allowed to do that.

Therefore I propose that this fact should not be bypassed, that we should not try to offer a seat to Comrade Yeltsin next to the president of the country. Let us be done with this, esteemed comrades; you must turn to us, the parliament of the Russian Federation, turn to the people of Russia and the peoples of the Soviet Union specifically today to adopt a decision on this issue and finally put an end... [changes thought] I support the speech by the comrade from Uzbekistan, a member of the Supreme Soviet, because Comrade Yeltsin is not alone. A number of leaders have emerged today who in their political ambitions have no regard for the people.

[Lukyanov] Yuriy Kamalovich...

[Sharipov, continuing] Therefore, I ask you to support me in this question. Thank you for your attention.

[Lukyanov] Deputy Denisov has the floor, and I am being asked—I see a woman is standing, I cannot but give her the floor—and I have several demands; Deputy Sukhov writes to me that Deputy Chekhoyev was the very first to ask for the floor. Let us give him the floor and then we will debate. How long can we go on? If you please!

[Denisov] Comrades, I think that yesterday's television appearance by Boris Nikolayevich, which essentially contained a call for a change in the system of power in the country, creates an extraordinary situation in this country, and therefore we cannot ignore it completely. At the same time, however, I do not think that we should inflame passions and excite emotions here. I think we should simply ask the Russian legislature to express its position on the address. One has to expect that it will rise to the occasion. Thank you. [applause]

[Lukyanov] You have the floor, please, you have been standing for a long time. I will give the floor to Deputy Chekhoyev, and let's decide what to do. If you please!

[Fomenko] Deputy Fomenko, member of the Organizational Council of the all-Union Association of Deputies of the Soyuz group. Yesterday's statement by Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin essentially puts at stake the destiny of our Union, the fate of the prosperity of its people, and, if you like, the lives of millions of people and our international peace. With unbelievable ease they have been thrown onto the scales of political ambition, and they have become the small change of certain leaders' pretentions to power—leaders whose representative, Deputy Yeltsin, spoke yesterday. I would like to stress that it is precisely the arrogant ambition of political leaders and of deputy Yeltsin personally, and not that of the Supreme Soviet of Russia. I am sure that the RSFSR Supreme Soviet did not give Boris Nikolayevich the authority to take such steps, and I think that it will yet express its stance on the issue of why and for what purpose the RSFSR Supreme Soviet is constantly being drawn into the confrontation with the central legislative and executive bodies.

Boris Nikolayevich declared that the radicalism of the Russian Parliament, by comparison with the Union Parliament, was the cause of the war of the laws. Yes, this is radicalism, but radicalism frequently going outside the USSR Constitution and outside normal relations between state bodies.

No one asked the peoples of our enormous Russia whether they are in agreement with the disintegration of the USSR, with the dismantling of socialism and the restoration of bourgeois order in the country. This is precisely what Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin and those who are with him are pushing our country toward. There is no doubt today that they have decided to take extreme actions, essentially aimed against the people, on the very eve of the referendum on 17 March, clearly realizing that the people will vote in favor of preserving the renewed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

It is very difficult for the country: The Supreme Soviet is seeking a way out of the economic crisis in a very difficult situation. Life is making it necessary to take unpopular measures, but at this very moment they want to drag us into palace intrigues—there's no other name for it—the essence of which amounts to deputy Yeltsin's claim to power. I think that all those who hold dear the interests of the people should have their firm say today. Yesterday, deputy Koltsov talked about the CPSU being implicated in a coup d'etat. But what description is one to give to Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's address today? What is it, if not an attempt to replace the legally elected power at a time when resolute measures are being taken. Thank you for your attention.

[Lukyanov] Right, comrades. I am going to give the floor to Comrade Chekhoyev, and we will have to agree on something: I have another 12 requests to speak. Hold on, Comrade [name indistinct]. I have your proposal, and others, so let's decide now. I could give everyone a minute each. Go ahead.

[Chekhoyev] Esteemed comrades! It has been said here that passions should not be inflamed, that we should not jump to conclusions, that the situation is not that difficult and not that dangerous. But I must—and want—to say that the situation in the country at the present time is critical, particularly in the wake of yesterday's address. Let us call a spade a spade! Today, there are five—or perhaps even six by now—republics that are within the composition of the USSR, while at the same time not of it. Given this, the statement made yesterday by Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin is for all intents and purposes a declaration of the start of civil war. Now, given this situation, if the Supreme Soviet skirts around the subject by issuing just another appeal, or another declaration, then our electorates—let alone our consciences—ought not to forgive us for the fact that those of us sitting here are actually helping to bring about the disintegration of our state by our inactivity.

Given this, I believe that those snap speeches we have heard here today in the past 45 minutes—and who knows, perhaps another 5 minutes will be granted—will contribute nothing. I believe that what we have to do is discuss the situation in the country. These are all links in one big chain. In order to understand the reasons that prompted Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin to speak as he did yesterday, we must at the very least study the most recent documents of the Democratic Party of Russia; study the most recent documents of the Inter-Regional Group of Deputies, where it is stated in black and white that it is time to move from consensus to opposition, and to wage a struggle for power. These documents exist, and ought to be published, so that people might know all this.

If we say that we really do desire order in the country, and if we want the unity of our Union, then I believe the issue must be debated. We in the Soyuz group have already discussed this matter, and I believe that given a situation where the Union is disintegrating before our very eyes, it might well be time to consider a nationwide state of emergency.

[Lukyanov] Comrades, this is the proposal: I have just received a note from Deputy Samarin and he writes that we should not be restricted to five minutes. [sounds of protest from the hall] Just a minute, just a minute, listen, please. I have also received a proposal from Deputy Koltsov. He puts his question like this, as you will remember from his request yesterday: He is now putting this question about making an addition, making an amendment to the law on defending the dignity of the president. Election officials heading the election bodies may not publicly voice their opinions on the activities of the USSR president without the consent of that body, the election body of which he is head, not without its consent. Deputy Lisitskiy proposes that persons heading representative bodies of power do not have the right to demand the resignation of the USSR president without the consent of the body that elected him. Deputy Kirilov proposes that a joint session of the Supreme Soviet and the Council of the Federation be convened, and so on.

It seems to me that it would be correct to do the following: Those comrades who have spoken—they represent some of our groups here, groups from the autonomous republics and oblasts, groups from the Union, groups of communists—should get together and prepare a document, a statement, or it could be an appeal, or it could be a decision of the Supreme Soviet, as Comrade Chekhoyev said just now. Let us agree on the following: I would like to instruct—insofar as among those who spoke here today were representatives from the commissions—say, commission Chairman Denisov, who has been speaking here, commission Chairman Sharipov, who has been speaking here, and representatives of the coordinating group, Soyuz, Chekhoyev—let the three of them head this group encompassing all those who wrote notes. Apart from that—those standing at the microphones—deputy Chernyak, Surkov, Angapov, and now Shapovalenko, Kirilov, other deputies, Angapov, (Golikov), (Babileva), Chernyshev, and others who wrote to me: I ask you, with the participation of these comrades, today, during the recess, the main recess, to

prepare a document we could discuss in the afternoon. This will be the order of things. Well, comrades, do you agree? There is no need to vote on the instruction to these three people to form the group.

Supreme Soviet Appeals for End to Gulf War

LD2002201291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1843 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Moscow, 20 February (TASS)—The USSR Supreme Soviet has addressed all parliaments, legislators, politicians, statesmen, and people of goodwill with an appeal to facilitate as much as possible an end to the war in the Persian Gulf.

The appeal, which was adopted at the session here yesterday, expresses concern in connection with the dramatic events in the Persian Gulf region, where military actions are acquiring a more and more large-scale and destructive nature with every passing day. Innocent people are dying, and huge material damage is being caused. The danger of catastrophic consequences to the environment, the economy, and cultural monuments is real. Extreme anxiety is caused by the possibility of weapons of mass destruction being used.

The USSR Supreme Soviet believes that it is necessary to stop the slide into the abyss as soon as possible. The conflict could have irreparable consequences for the peoples of the region and the world as a whole.

The USSR Supreme Soviet supports the active diplomatic efforts of the Soviet leadership, whose aim is to resolve the conflict in the Persian Gulf, and believes that it is necessary to increase these efforts, and consistently work toward the quickest end to the war and the restoration of peace.

The appeal notes that surmounting the present crisis will open the way for a settlement of other burning problems in the Near East, above all the Arab-Israeli conflict, and for the creation of a lasting system of regional security in the region of the Persian Gulf, and in the Near and Middle East as a whole, with active UN involvement. All peoples and all countries of the world are directly interested in it.

The USSR Supreme Soviet confirms again its determination to secure an immediate halt of the war in the Persian Gulf.

Warning Issued on South Ossetia Situation

LD2002115991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1120 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Vladimir Isachenko]

[Text] Moscow 20 Feb (TASS)—The USSR Supreme Soviet has warned the Georgian legislature that if it does not take urgent measures to end the bloodshed in South Ossetia, the Union authorities will introduce a state of emergency [chrezvychaynoye polozheniye] there.

The conflict in South Ossetia, an autonomous oblast in the territory of Georgia, has worsened sharply since the end of last year when the Georgian legislature adopted an anticonstitutional decision to eliminate South Ossetian autonomy.

The USSR legislature, which discussed the situation in South Ossetia during closed session on Monday, passed a resolution today which described it as a gross violation of the constitutions of the USSR and of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic and of international laws on human rights.

The USSR Supreme Soviet advised the Georgian legislature to discuss within three days the question of extending the state of emergency to the whole of South Ossetia (previously, it was declared in Tskhinvali, the capital of the oblast and the Dzhavskiy Rayon adjacent to it). It also advised it to take measures to disarm illegal armed groups and to prevent the possibility of illegal arms production.

The USSR Supreme Soviet proposes to the Georgian legislature that it should put an immediate end to the blockade of Tskhinvali and supply the population of the oblast center and other rayons in South Ossetia with electricity, fuel, and food.

The resolution says that if these conditions are not fulfilled by the Georgian legislature, the USSR law on a state of emergency should come into force.

Pavlov Answers Questions on Price Reform

PM2002160691 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 20 Feb 91 Second Edition pp 1-2

[Report by V. Izgarshev and Ye. Sorokin under the "At the USSR Supreme Soviet Session" rubric: "Action and Talk"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] At the afternoon session, as was agreed beforehand, Prime Minister V. Pavlov answered written questions from people's deputies. In particular, it seems, contrary to the predictions of some economists, the exchange of 50- and 100-ruble notes did not lead to a flow of investments out of accounts, but to an unprecedented influx. In the eight days of January after 23 January, the savings banks received 5.3 billion rubles [R]. This is unprecedented. What could be more convincing evidence of the population's trust in state financial policy?

The prime minister demonstrated, in answer to a question, that the average family of five—husband, wife, two children at school, and a pensioner grandmother—will receive approximately R250 in compensation, in addition to their wages.

What will the proposed wage level be for teachers and doctors? A doctor at the beginning of his career will receive R230-260; an experienced surgeon—R450-460; a primary school teacher—R230-240; a teacher with a lot

of experience and a teaching load of 18 hours a week—R350; a librarian—R230-300.

And now information of a different kind: It seems that our Union government does not, after all, shun the internal bartering that is now coming under fire. Answering a question on why flour, macaroni, and vermicelli have disappeared from the stores despite the very generous harvest of 1990, the premier reasoned as follows. Yes, he confirmed, there was an excellent grain harvest last year: 237 million tonnes as measured in the hoppers, and 218 million as measured in the barns. But we received 18 million tonnes less than the state order stipulated, and 28 million tonnes less than in 1978, when the harvest was equally good. So the grain remained in the producers' storehouses, and in order to obtain it, it was necessary to resort to direct bartering. It was decided that cars and other goods for the countryside would be delivered additionally, out of future allocations, to three republics—the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic], the Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. In exchange, we expect to receive 3 million tonnes of grain. Naturally, this is destined for flour, macaroni, and vermicelli for the population. This is what happens when there is no delivery discipline. The country cannot live without it, the premier stressed. Otherwise it can come about that in some cities—and this is already happening—grain stocks are measured in days.

At the evening session the deputies continued for a further hour to discuss the premier's report and the resolution on this question. As the chairman noted, the premier unexpectedly "showed his hand" in an intervention. Replying to a deputy, he demonstrated ardently and passionately that the center and the republics cannot act separately on price policy. If you like, you can set your own prices, but they cannot be higher than union prices. You can set your own levels of compensation, but they cannot be lower than the union level. Russia's leadership, for instance, is coming out in favor of R40 in compensation, instead of the R60 proposed by the union government. Why, on what grounds?

We asked People's Deputy A. Saunin, an economist, to share his thoughts on the premier's answers to questions.

[Saunin] The situation now is that there should be no question of alternative versions of the reform of market prices. Last spring, and even in the fall, it would have been possible to discuss, calculate, and choose options and methods, not simply in connection with price rises, but in relation to the whole reform of pricing—of both wholesale and retail prices, in their interrelationship. But now there is no time to choose what you like and what you don't like. Something must be done immediately, before final financial collapse occurs. Because the situation is getting out of control. Prices are rising. Region by region, in the cities and villages, in krays and republics, everyone is dictating his own prices to suit himself. Contract prices, commercial prices, and goodness knows what else have all sprung up. And they all hit the working person's purse and empty his none too full pocket.

[PRAVDA] So the question is this: What is to be done to avoid this collapse with the smallest possible losses?

[Saunin] Precisely. And in this sense, as an economist, I share the view set forth by the prime minister. First, a decision on prices should only be adopted in conjunction with the republics. We all got into this state of collapse together, we must get out of it together, by supporting each other, not by accusing or attacking each other. You cannot act like this: Let the center take unpopular decisions on prices, and we will take care of the compensation, as we understand it. That is just not on.

[PRAVDA] What about the social protection measures proposed by the premier? What do you think of them, Anatoliy Nikolayevich?

[Saunin] There are questions about this. But I agree that total compensation, if introduced, would get us nowhere. It would only lead to a new spiral in prices. Compensation for the least protected members of society—yes. That is necessary. But the rest, let them earn by their own hands, their intelligence, and their worker's wit the few percent that are not paid out to them. [Saunin ends]

The Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution on the prime minister's report. Then USSR Foreign Minister A. Bessmertnykh delivered a report on the situation in the Persian Gulf region and the measures being taken by the Soviet leadership.

PRAVDA Carries Pavlov's 18 Feb Speech

PM2102090091 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 19 Feb 91 Second Edition pp 1, 2

[Speech by Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov at the Supreme Soviet in Moscow on 18 February: "On the Reform of Retail Prices and the Population's Social Protection; Speech by V.S. Pavlov at the USSR Supreme Soviet's Fifth Session"]

[Text] Esteemed comrade deputies!

In accordance with the decisions of the Fourth Congress of USSR People's Deputies and the agreement in principle between the USSR and the republics on the need to pursue a common policy in the sphere of price formation and the population's social protection, the USSR Cabinet of Ministers has prepared the appropriate proposals and submits them for your consideration. The point at issue concerns a reform of retail prices and its linkage with questions concerning the population's wages and social protection.

I would like to once more turn back to the cause which prompted the need to implement these major socioeconomic measures. Today we are talking not just about a reform of retail prices but about a broad reform of price formation as a whole. In essence, a reform of labor remuneration in the national economy is also beginning. It would therefore be fundamentally wrong to believe that the reform of price formation is simply a result of

the introduction of new wholesale and purchasing prices. It is not a matter of someone's having committed a mistake by changing wholesale and purchasing prices without sufficient justification. Had this been the case, the situation could have been—in principle—rectified easily and a long time ago. It would have been sufficient to repeal the decision in question and dismiss the people who committed the mistake. But the measures in question were taken in execution of decisions by the Union's supreme organ of legislative power—the Congress of People's Deputies.

The essence of the matter is that that the wholesale and purchasing prices in force until 1 January this year did not reflect the real value of the labor by miners, metallurgy workers, railroad workers, peasants, and other representatives of production sphere sectors. Nor did they reflect the value of natural resources. The question was posed thus: Was it fair to constantly subsidize the work by enterprises in these sectors from the budget and, in general, did we have any grounds to expect that, in these conditions, we would be able to boost production, accelerate scientific and technical progress, and extricate ourselves from the crisis during the transition to market relations?

In the same way, we cannot accept the accusations leveled against the Union government by the leaders of several krays, oblasts, and the cities of Moscow and Leningrad that the delays in solving the question of raising retail prices is holding back consumer goods sales.

Let me remind you of a question I was asked, in my capacity as USSR minister of finance, when the country's 1991 budget was being discussed: What is happening to the 203 billion rubles [R] of subsidies and price differentials? As far as I can recall, the question was asked by Comrade Lisitskiy. I must clarify that the budget you set for 1991 made provisions for a total of R229 billion in such subsidies and price differentials for various categories of products and consumer goods. How come, one might ask, that this sum proved insufficient for even one month? I think that here we have the effect of other causes, and I will dwell on them later. But let us turn back to basic and fundamental principles. We feel that the approaches toward the reform of price formation, which were adopted by the Congress of People's Deputies and the USSR Supreme Soviet, are correct and should be implemented as early as possible, rather than being revised, as called for by some mass media, economists, and deputies.

I can say that the cause is obviously contained in the fact that the money allocated for retail price subsidies was put to different use by several regions and republics. And they are indeed short of money today. Therefore, the question concerns the use of price rises to make up for this shortage while providing inadequate or, to put it in other words, insufficiently adequate compensation for individual strata and categories of the population. I can cite the following figure. Subsidies in the Russian Federation should have amounted to R116 billion, but the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] budget approved only R69.7 billion. There are no subsidies for light industry and certain food industry products. The Ukraine, for example, approved R20.9 billion instead of R26.7 billion [in subsidies] for meat and dairy production.

It is here, as a matter of fact, that the cause and acuteness of today's problem lie, and I am unwilling to engage in polemics here, since I am profoundly convinced that the question of reform cannot be replaced by talk about who has spent the money on what. Proceeding from this premise, the USSR Government, jointly with the union republic governments, engaged in intensive fine tuning and coordination of the parameters of retail prices reform over the last month. These questions were considered by the Federation Council on two occasions. Both the USSR president and the republics' top leaders—proceeding from the need to stabilize the consumer market, intensify the motivations for highly productive labor, boost the production of consumer goods, and combat speculation and the shadow economy—agreed on the need to establish uniform countrywide limits for the increase of state retail prices for basic food and nonfood goods which determine the population's living standards. This means that retail prices and charges for goods and services must be formed with due consideration for the real costs of their production and marketing, their consumer qualities, and the correlation of demand and supply.

It is assumed that the overall level of retail prices will rise approximately 60 percent. Furthermore, in our opinion, the state itself must establish **firm list prices** for a series of consumer goods which determine the population's living standards and must monitor their growth. Taking specific national, regional, and production features into consideration, we proceed from the premise that a limit on their rises must be set at union level. What this means is that the republics could set prices for such goods even below the level set by the center. We are specifically talking about meat, milk, eggs, bread, flour, sugar, tea, salt, linen, and children's goods. This category also includes charges for intrarepublic and passenger transportation. It would be wrong if the cost of tomatoes at places where they are produced is the same as beyond the Polar Circle or in Moscow; if milk is sold at places where it is commercially produced at the same price as in major industrial centers. In other words, it is necessary to somehow restore the notion of real value with due consideration for costs, transportation expenditures, and other elements which make up the value and costs of goods.

At the same time we assume that prices must also take into account the creation of the requisite interest in boosting the marketability of our agriculture. But we deem it necessary, regardless of all costs, **not to increase** today the current state retail prices for medicaments and products for medical purposes, coffee, synthetic fiber

textiles and products, synthetic footwear, fur products, knitwear, hosiery, toys, gasoline, kerosene, electricity, gas, coal, domestic stove fuel and firewood allocated to the population, and vodka.

If deputies wish to know the reason why this list of commodities was compiled, I could dwell on the topic separately. Each one of these commodities has its own specific features and reasons. Here we have, on the one hand, high-revenue commodities and, on the other hand, loss-making output. There is an approach from the viewpoint of social importance for the population, there is also an approach from the economic viewpoint. Each one of these commodities is geared toward a perfectly specific population group. Speaking of vodka, no matter how much we talk today about its being an evil, this evil is nonetheless part of our reality and any increase of retail prices for vodka would go beyond the bounds of common sense—first, it would stimulate moonshining, and second, it would hit family budgets one way or another.

With a view to limiting the rise of retail prices, we assume that in 1991 it will be necessary to retain state subsidies for meat, milk, and fish products, medicaments, and several other socially important consumer goods. We deem it improper to set retail prices today at a level which would exceed purchasing prices and circulation costs. The point is that the level of these prices is considerably affected by the factor of the persistently low qualitative level of our agriculture's development. Furthermore, agricultural output still incurs great losses and it would be incorrect to shift them onto the population by setting higher retail prices. We therefore believe that all subsidies should not be eliminated in 1991, even though the sale of foodstuffs at the set prices will not involve any losses. But subsidies for these commodities will remain. True enough, they will be reduced approximately threefold.

It is intended to expand the range of commodities sold to the population **at contractual (free) and regulated retail prices.** According to our estimates, based on the list of these commodities, such prices will apply to the sale of approximately 30 percent of commodities on the basis of the proportion they represent in the total volume of commodity turnover. Such prices will apply, for example, to the sale of: natural fiber textiles, new and fashionable products made of natural fibers, leather footwear for adults, fashionable and high quality sports footwear, carpets and rugs, watches and clocks, some refrigerator models, washing and sewing machines, and electrical and radio frequency instruments; cured raw meat sausage products, confectionery, and fresh fish; imported tobacco products. We proceeded from the premise that union republic governments could add to and amplify this list.

We assume that the proposed measures for retail prices reform, coupled with the stabilization and boosting of production, will make it possible to normalize the situation in the consumer market.

It is being said today that, in a series of regions, there are widespread instances of commodities lying in warehouses but not being sold through the trade network because, it is claimed, they are still awaiting the setting of retail prices which would enable enterprises to operate at a profit. This applies to products for cultural, daily life, and domestic purposes. I must frankly say that this is also—to put it mildly—incorrect, because at the end of last year the USSR State Committee for Prices gave industrial enterprises the right to sell their output—in cases when their retail prices were lower than wholesale prices—at the new wholesale prices plus a 20-percent trade surcharge. It must be noted that the majority of local organs did not accept this decision for execution. Consequently, a critical situation was artificially created as regards the sale of goods for cultural, daily life, and domestic purposes.

I deem it fundamentally important to report to you, comrade deputies, that, in compliance with your decisions, the reform of retail prices and charges at this stage was linked primarily with the problem of **the population's wages and social protection,** with the question of priority implementation of compensation measures.

We assumed that people are absolutely correct when they unambiguously state today: Nobody is likely to believe in compensation until such time as people know in advance how much you will pay them or, even better, how much of that money they will actually get in their hands. Proceeding from this premise, we approached our work from the position that the population's compensation for the additional expenditure caused by the increase of retail prices must be provided in line with the following basic **principles.**

The population will be fully compensated for higher commodity costs of the following basic food and nonfood goods: linen, textiles in mass demand, clothing and footwear, personal hygiene products and tobacco, construction materials, wallpaper, crockery, domestic chemical products, some other goods, and passenger transportation charges.

There will also be full compensation as regards the range of children's goods, with targeted channeling of appropriate funds to families with children under age.

The size of compensation payments funded by budget and other sources will be differentiated according to the socio-demographic groups of the population, with priority given to material support for socially vulnerable strata, primarily children, students, the disabled, pensioners, young people, single-parent families, and large families.

In addition to this, it is planned to raise working people's labor remuneration by means of a simultaneous reduction of the profits tax payable by enterprises and kolkhozes [collective farms] and the tax on citizens' incomes. It is planned to have a targeted channeling of part of the funds which our enterprises will gain through higher prices and charges into additional increases of

salary levels for leading professional workers in the spheres of education, health care and social security, culture, and archive institutions.

It is intended to increase current grants and introduce new ones for students. There will an increase in the amounts of monetary allowances and of food, kit, and other categories of material provisions for servicemen. There will be an increase of the amount of all categories of pensions, benefits, and other social payments, and there will be an expansion of the circle of persons enjoying material support by the state, which will be financed by the USSR Social Security Fund and the USSR Pensions Fund. There will be an increase of expenditure on social services for the populations in hospitals, boarding schools, schools, homes for the elderly and the disabled, preschool institutions, and other institutions in the social sphere.

We proceeded from the premise that monetary compensation for low-income strata of the population will be supplemented by various types of social assistance and primarily aid-in-kind to be rendered by local organs.

It is planned to abolish the tiered differentiation of state retail prices for foodstuffs and to set the amount of compensation payments with due consideration for regional wages coefficients. In this way we are not going to overlook people working in the country's extremely harsh northern regions.

Bearing in mind the instability of the current situation in the economy, the amounts of compensation must be determined by agreement between the union and the republics on the basis of the population's actual consumption of goods and services from state resources in 1990. I deliberately emphasize the fact that so far we have been unable to maintain the 1990 consumption level. The first payments of compensation to students and school pupils, pensioners, children, and other persons in receipt of social pensions and benefits will be made on a priority basis before the new prices for consumer goods and services are introduced. In this process, the specific amount of and procedure for compensation payments, taking regional conditions and structures of consumption into account, will be determined by republican organs at a level which should not be lower than that adopted at all-union level as the guaranteed amount of incomes for the relevant population groups. The minimum guaranteed incomes of workers in state enterprises and in organizations and institutions must be secured through a review of wage rates and salary scales. In this process working people must be compensated for the full increase of prices for goods and services in daily demand in amounts which we agree as minimum and taking these enterprises' potential into account. Salaries and wages will be increased according to procedures and by amounts to be determined by the enterprise administration in coordination with the trade unions, on the basis of the general principles laid down by the union government and the republic governments, but by no less than R60 per month.

We also take into account the fact that, in many cases, enterprises may not be technically able to effect a review of wages and salaries. Therefore, with a view to ensuring priority compensation, the first payments must take the form of special wage supplements in absolute amounts under separate accounts headings, to be subsequently incorporated in the wages and salaries.

These principle could also be recommended for adoption by cooperative and collective businesses.

Following the wages and salaries increases implemented in this fashion, enterprises will be able to autonomously set higher wages and salaries for their workers and employees, preserving in the process the current relationships between wages and salaries within personnel categories, and also to determine the type and amounts of supplementary and additional payments, bonuses, and other incentive payments including one-shot long-service awards. Moreover the specific amounts of wages and salaries, as well as of supplementary and additional payments and bonuses for the appropriate professionally skilled groups of workers, will be determined at enterprises by the conditions of collective contracts and wages agreements. Enterprises will exercise these rights by using funds being channeled into labor remuneration payments in compliance with the USSR laws on enterprises in the USSR, on taxation of enterprises, associations, and organizations, and on the 1991 union budget. In this context it will be necessary to increase the base labor remuneration fund which is used to calculate the consumption fund for 1991. According to our estimates, the guideline for this should be set somewhere at the level of R450-480.

Enterprises, organizations, and institutions financed by the budget will autonomously exercise their rights within the limit of funds allocated to them for this purpose under the heading of supplementary and additional payments, bonuses, and other incentive payments. As regards wages and salaries, this should be done by agreement with the relevant organs which finance these enterprises, organizations, and institutions.

For the purpose of stepping up the social protection of workers in education, health care and social security, cultural institutions, and archive institutions, it is necessary to close the prevailing gap in the level of their labor remuneration by channeling part of the funds generated by higher prices and charges into increasing the wages of leading professional workers in these sectors. It will be necessary to set new wage and salary scales for the aforementioned categories of workers, increasing them on average by somewhere in the region of 60-80 percent as against the amount laid down by the union government. On the one hand, this will make it possible to bring their wage level closer to the level of labor remuneration for workers in the production sectors and, at the same time, to bring into line the approaches toward labor remuneration in different regions. It is no secret to you that today different places in our country pay different labor remuneration, and the result has been

a lack of coordination—with teachers and physicians going on strike in some places and working in others because some regions have come up with some additional resources to finance wage increases. It seems that the statewide principle of uniform labor remuneration for equal labor must be preserved in this sphere.

We also assume that the republics, with due consideration for the necessary amounts of guaranteed incomes for the population as a result of price rises, will raise the current R300 wage threshold so as to bring in coefficients for work in mountain, desert, and arid regions and percentage wage supplements for continuous work in the country's northern and eastern regions. It is necessary to especially single out the question of assistance to families with children—one of the largest socially unprotected population groups. For the purpose of maintaining these families' living standards, it is necessary to increase the amount of social benefits they receive by approximately 60-80 percent and to introduce special compensation or benefits for children aged up to 16 years who do not receive such benefits today, and even for children aged up to 18 years if the child is studying and not receiving a grant.

Until the new minimum wage level is ratified, it is necessary to introduce state guarantees for the minimum amount of current family benefits of R250 on a child's birth and monthly payments of R110. It is necessary to increase maternity leave benefits, as well as the benefits for children of conscript servicemen, children in care, and single mothers—in other words, it is necessary to implement a large-scale program to boost the stability of the material situation of families with children.

Now there is no need to look at the full program in great detail. I would like to emphasize that we are deliberately undertaking a certain redistribution of funds to the benefits of such families. This term also includes students. VUZ [higher education establishment] students must, in our opinion, have a set grant of R120, with R100 for technical college students and R80 for students at vocational and technical schools.

I am especially highlighting the problem of pensioners, the disabled, and families that have lost their breadwinner. Here we also need an appropriate compensation program.

As regards servicemen, it is planned to raise the salaries of the officers corps, NCO's, petty officers, and servicemen on extended service by R80, with a R60 increase for rank-and-file and senior personnel of internal affairs organs. Conscript servicemen, Suvorov and Nakhimov school cadets, and music school cadets and students will receive an increase of R20 per month, and noncommissioned students at military education establishments will receive R60 per month. In addition, it is necessary to correspondingly increase the expenditure on food, kit, medical, and other categories of material provision for servicemen.

Compensation payments of R60 ought also to be introduced for nonworking wives of servicemen and of rank-and-file and senior personnel of internal affairs organs in isolated garrisons and places where there are no employment opportunities. This list must be compiled by the USSR Ministry of Defense, the USSR KGB, and the USSR MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs]. It will also be necessary to increase the pensions of these departments' retired servicemen.

The country has, for the first time, encountered the problem of unemployment. Proceeding from a comprehensive study of all the associated problems, we are thinking of introducing a compensation payment of R50 per month while these persons—those who will be deemed unemployed according to established legal procedures—undergo retraining. This amount of R50 should be paid in addition to unemployment benefits.

A whole series of measures are also planned with a view to instituting other compensation payments. Specifically, it is necessary to reduce the profits tax rate for enterprises to 35 percent, to raise the working people's nontaxable minimum wage to R160, and to correspondingly reduce the rate of tax on the income of citizens in excess of R160 per month.

The greatest problem which gave rise to very many debates is the protection of citizens' savings. We proceeded from the premise that, in all cases, the holders of deposit accounts and certificates should be compensated by means of a recalculation of their deposits. This question will be specially considered by the USSR Gosbank [State Bank] and the USSR Savings Bank, and will be solved in coordination with the USSR Cabinet of Ministers.

We have considered all the fundamental questions. Compensation for the population's savings will be effected by means of interest rates and recalculation of deposits according to a scale (or several scales) being developed for this purpose.

It must be said that there are two aspects of the situation today. Most republics have confirmed their agreement as regards the new price level, and it can be said that there are no disagreements on it.

As regards the question of compensation, today it has become one of the most fundamental ones. Two points of view have clashed perfectly openly here. We assumed that the questions of compensation ought to be resolved according to the principle of a uniform approach toward the all-Union market, just like the question of prices. There cannot be a single economic space if the remuneration of labor according to its quantity and quality is determined differently on different territories, while retail prices (one of the basic criteria for determining the value of labor) are determined on the basis of uniform approaches. This will not work. We believe that decisions on prices and compensations ought to be made at the level laid down by the USSR Constitution, which enshrines the USSR citizens' equal rights to labor, fair

labor remuneration, and social protection. These approaches were used in price formation and in determining the levels of the population's protection. But here, as I already mentioned, we came up against different approaches. Several republics—the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, and Belorussia—proposed that the USSR Government take on the solution of the question of raising retail prices, leaving compensation payments to the republics. The union government cannot accept this. This is due to differences in the development levels of our regions. Following the changes in the principles of price formation and the levels of retail prices, revenues will be generated on the territory of union republics which have a higher proportion of finished output production (primarily consumer goods). But there are also regions which supply these republics with raw materials, and they will find themselves without sources to finance the compensation of their population. In this sense, the republics seem to be divided into two "camps." Some will have additional funds to finance their expenditures, they enjoy a better protected status. But the other republics—willy-nilly—will have to either take the path of raising prices for raw materials (thus launching a fresh prices race spiral) or ask the center for compensation, the center in this case meaning the union government.

Since nowadays we do not have a single Union budget and revenues are strictly divided between the union and the republics, it can be said in advance that the Union government will not be in a position to give adequate support to these republics. This means that, in this case, we will be looking at another option—in other words, at the fact that such support could be provided by—if they so wished—the republics which happen to be "exporters" from the viewpoint of consumer goods production. And this means, willy-nilly, a de facto switch of the Union government's functions to the level of individual republics.

The Union government upholds its own point of view: Decisions on prices and on compensation at the level of minimum social protection must be made at the center, at an all-Union level.

The second aspect to which I would like to draw attention is the fact that we deem it necessary to solve the question of mutual relations between the center and the republics while implementing the reform of price formation since, in one way or another, we will have to effect a redistribution of additional revenues among individual regions, revenues which they will receive as a result of the reform of retail prices. I would say that we are talking about creating a kind of union-republican fund for the implementation of reform, because the problem of redistribution of resources concerns not only mutual relations between republics at union level but also mutual relations within the republics themselves.

Taking the Russian Federation as an example, it is perfectly obvious that, following the increase of retail prices, Yakutia—whose main export commodities are gold and diamonds while 90 percent of all consumer goods are brought in from other regions—must receive a direct compensation subsidy either from the union government or from the Russian Federation government, otherwise the republic's population will be simply unable to cope with such a price rise.

I would like to dwell on another fundamental question. Many deputies have heard that minimum compensations of R40 were mentioned at a certain stage. The point is that, at the start of our work with the republics, we took the path of compensation for the increase of retail prices fixed by the state. When the results were summed up, estimates showed that the prices for all goods, whose prices will be assigned by the state to the category of regulated or free prices, will naturally increase simultaneously with the increase of state retail prices.

We did not require any proof of this, but when the calculations were made it emerged that, out of the total amount of increases, approximately one-third fell within the category of free (contractual) prices. It became obvious that it would be incorrect to put off the compensation for rising free prices until the stage of indexation, since quantity would be transformed into quality. We also had to recognize the uncontrolled nature of the process of price rises as a result of their liberalization through autonomous decisions made at kray, oblast, and even enterprise level. Therefore, in this case it is deemed necessary not only to include the value of changes in state retail prices in the compensation payments but also to take into account our forecast of the leap in prices for the goods whose price we refuse to firmly fix. In essence, this approach produces a new level of minimum compensation for working people—no longer R40 but actually R60. This new level encountered objections by some republics. I must note that by now most republics—except the Russian Federation—have withdrawn their objections. The republics believed that they would lack the funds to provide compensation at the level intended by the union government. I must report to the Supreme Soviet that all our calculations are based on the premise that we will provide compensation to the order of 85 percent of increased retail prices.

Why 85 percent? First, we believe that compensation need not be paid for all the goods whose prices will be increased, and I mentioned some of them today. Second, here we must also take into account the calculations on the basis of the 1990 consumption level: In actual fact, we are at the level of 95 percent of volume in physical terms.

We arrived at the conclusion that, on the one hand, we need a certain reserve to provide insurance against possible mistakes in territorial distribution or in calculations as regards commodity structures (from the viewpoint of production and imports). We also assumed that a certain proportion of the retail prices increase should, in essence, play the role of a market-stabilizing factor.

In other words, the point of what we intend to do is to prevent us from letting the reform of price formation as a necessary factor of transition to the market degenerate into a confiscatory reform of retail prices.

It thus appears that 85 percent compensation for the cost of increased retail prices, including the cost of liberalizing prices, is the optimum amount. It is envisaged that, following the implementation of the reform of price formation, we will gradually advance along the path of further **liberalization** of wholesale and retail prices alike. In this process, it will be necessary to resolve the question of indexation since the possibility of further price rises cannot be ruled out.

A draft decree on general principles for building a minimum consumption budget, elaborated in line with the Fourth Congress of USSR People's Deputies decisions, has been submitted for consideration by the USSR president. As you may recall, it was said at the Congress that the minimum consumption budget must be built on the basis of normatives and must determine citizens' minimum living standards.

I am confident that, in the process of implementing the program for transition to market relations, we will strive to ensure observance of the uniformity of the principles of price formation and of citizens' labor remuneration and social protection throughout the country's territory. This is a mandatory condition for the preservation of a single economic space and a single state.

We ask the Supreme Soviet to support our proposals for the reform's implementation.

Political & Social

Feature Comments on Yeltsin TV Interview

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[Feature comprising commentary by Viktor Shirokov, commentary by Vladimir Ryashin, and Resolution of a Moscow CPSU Gorkom and Moscow City Party Organization Control Commission Plenum under the general heading: "RSFSR Supreme Soviet Chairman Sees Development of Current Sociopolitical and Economic Situation Heading for Confrontation with USSR President"]

[Text] [Shirokov] To tell the truth, many people were rather looking forward to Boris Nikolayevich's live broadcast. Particularly as he himself has repeatedly complained about a blockade by the television First Program, which he says is preventing him from directly addressing Russia's peoples. Now it has happened...

On Tuesday evening, in prime time, B.N. Yeltsin was interviewed on the First Program by television journalist S. Lomakin. The RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Supreme Soviet chairman was assisted by Russian People's Deputy O. Poptsov. Assisted is not the correct word. He can be said to have performed a director's role, explaining some rather vaguely expressed ideas. In particular, whether Russia is to create its own guard or just "think" about this.

Many viewers probably witnessed the conversation, so there is no point in relating it in detail. Let us just dwell on a few points. Assessing the proposed reform of price formation, B.N. Yeltsin claimed that it would lead to an impasse, since compensation incorporated in pay will only lead to further rounds of price hikes and inflation. Let us not get involved in a purely economic dispute—that is for experts. We had hoped, however, that Boris Nikolayevich would come up with a rather substantial alternative program. Unfortunately, there were no revelations. Apart from belated regret about the Shatalin-Yavlinskiy "500 Days" program, which had been "torn up and thrown away," and its unexplored merits, viewers heard nothing new. It is worth noting that the interviewee himself admitted a little later that it had been a mistake to spend nearly three months worrying about the discarded "500 Days" program and, as a result, to end up without a Russian program of his own.

Touching briefly on the sensational case of the abortive sale of 140 billion rubles for dollars, B.N. Yeltsin put it down to... intrigues by the KGB, which always has several cases of this kind at the ready, to be produced at the right moment in order to compromise the head of the Russian parliament. In general it must be noted that the grudge motive was constantly discernible in the course of the interview, since Boris Nikolayevich believes the media, particularly the party media, systematically and deliberately persecute him.

But these are all details, the background, so to speak, against which, at the end of the conversation, B.N. Yeltsin made his statement which, it has to be said, was couched in extremely harsh and we would even say unparliamentary terms. He called for a break with the center and a refusal to cooperate with it and he demanded USSR President M.S. Gorbachev's resignation. To the moderator's reasonable observation that the people are tired of this confrontation and that they expect unity and consolidation of forces to overcome the crisis that is threatening the country, B.N. Yeltsin replied by groundlessly accusing the president of lying and deceiving the people.

It was clear that this was a "piece of homework" concocted, evidently, by a narrow circle of supporters probably behind the back of the Russian legislature which, like the country's Supreme Soviet, has certainly yet to evaluate this statement. It was perplexing that an irresponsible call for overt and furious confrontation was made at a time when the country is awaiting the solution of problems that are of global importance to it, when the USSR Cabinet of Ministers is starting to take the first steps toward the stabilization of the economic situation and when the USSR president is doing everything possible to impose order. The RSFSR Supreme Soviet chairman's unconstructive, destructive step is a logical

extension of the line whereby often hasty decisions are made in the Russian legislature.

Let us hope that all reasonable people will draw for themselves the clear conclusion that to make a complete break with the center and indulge in irresponsible incitement to overt confrontation at a time like this is to work toward the disintegration of the Union, toward the deepening and aggravation of crisis phenomena, and toward unpredictable social cataclysms.

The interview, as the moderator observed with chagrin, ended on a pessimistic note. Indeed, the stance adopted by B.N. Yeltsin certainly does not inspire optimism. Moreover, it exacerbates the already tense situation in the country. Its aims are no longer in doubt: B.N. Yeltsin is doing everything to pursue his own personal ambitions and aspirations, which are remote from the aims of the democratization and renewal of our society and from perestroyka. [Shirokov commentary ends]

Boris Yeltsin's "Big Chance"

[Ryashin] I do not know how to react to yesterday's television interview with the official leader of Russia's political "stock exchange," but, judging by everything, what had been predicted by serious forecasters came to pass on the evening of 19 February 1991—in the space of an hour the myth which, for all its simplicity, had still given millions of people hope (that "Yeltsin is the fatherland's savior!") was debunked.

We will not surmise just how far, in preparing for the address to his fellow citizens, he disregarded the results of recent opinion polls showing a decline in his standing. However much respect we may have for our efficient and up-to-the-minute sociological service, we should remember that sociology is a capricious and changeable lady. She says: "They love you" today, but tomorrow will turn angrily away. Subtle and skillful politicians are not frightened by such fluctuations—they know how to tip the scales in their own favor.

However, the popularity rating is by no means an integral indicator. Rather, it merely reflects tactical successes or failures. Strategy is far more important for a leader who wants real recognition. It was in this area, in my view, that Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin made his fundamental mistakes. He failed to adapt to the new situation in which he found himself after being elected chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet: Thanks to a happy—and until recently one would have thought unlikely—turn of fate, he finds himself with more power in his hands than before.

However, finding himself at the helm of Russia, B.N. Yeltsin has still not abandoned the role which he probably finds more comfortable, customary, and congenial—the role of a man of the opposition, its leader. Yes, it once raised him up on a wave of success. But real politicians, even without shunning confrontation occasionally, set themselves—voluntarily or involuntarily, consciously or intuitively—a kind of quota for the number of times they are prepared to categorically say "No!"

Unfortunately, Boris Nikolayevich was not prepared to exercise this self-control.

In recent months he has been increasingly motivated by his enthusiasm for being negative. How often have we heard him invariably say "no" for all sorts of reasons.

Yesterday's interview was no exception. It merely confirmed yet again that B.N. Yeltsin does not accept the idea of consensus. Concluding the interview, he accused the president of striving for dictatorship and called for his resignation.

And he did not mention or even hint at any program during this "big chance" which the country had been awaiting so impatiently. It was all so old hat, everything was painfully familiar. What can you say about it? Surely only: "Oh, my poor motherland..." [Ryashin commentary ends]

Resolution of the Moscow CPSU Gorkom Plenum and the Moscow City Party Organization Control Commission

In connection with B.N. Yeltsin's address on Central Television 19 February 1991.

The plenum stresses that there is no task more important today than to maintain the country's viability and to uphold people's honor, dignity, and life. In these conditions it is impermissible even to raise the question of another ill-conceived change in the state's administrative system, which the will of the Fourth Congress of USSR People's Deputies only began to organize. It is criminal to pit the interests of Russia and the Union against each other.

This could lead to further destabilization of the situation, increasingly uncontrollable social processes, and chaos.

The plenum expresses support for USSR President M.S. Gorbachev, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, in his efforts to seek ways to get the country out of the crisis, prevent an escalation of tension, and preserve the renewed USSR.

Prime Minister Interviewed on Yeltsin, Prices

LD2002233191 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1845 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Studio interview with USSR Prime Minister Valentin Sergeyevich Pavlov by correspondent Stefanov on 20 February—recorded]

[Text] [Stefanov] Valentin Sergeyevich, in his television interview yesterday Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin spoke

very acrimoniously about the present government's economic policy. He recalled anew the 500 Days program and said that the center had torn up the program. What do you have to say about this?

[Pavlov] Well, personally I can say that I always prefer a substantive speech and not an acrimonious one. I am somehow more impressed by it.

As for the 500 Days Program, no one has torn it up in principle. It was integrated during the USSR Supreme Soviet debate in the various approaches to the problem of getting the country out of its crisis and shifting to market relations. So who tore it up? On the one hand no one tore it up, and on the other the Russian Federation proclaimed that it would put this program into effect and no one has taken this right away from the republic. Therefore one may agree with the program or one may disagree with it, but that is another question. However I have never heard of anyone preventing the implementation of the 500 Days Program.

But the point is in principle something different—the fact that from my viewpoint the 500 Days Program was oriented first and foremost, as one unfortunately encounters very often, toward the questions once again of how to divide up or redivide up what we possess. In effect it contained no points on how to multiply our wealth.

In this sense it essentially remained a paper program because we are today coming up against the same situation. We have less and less to share and that is why the problem is acute. And to say that the share program today turns out to be unrealizable or that essentially it simply cannot be realized in this respect—well, what can one say? The sharing should no doubt be done in a different way. I think that in any period of time you could only share out as much you produced. But the more there is the easier it is to share it and the less there is, the more difficult. In order to share the reduced national cake in the Russian Federation another program should no doubt have been applied. But we did not devise it. The share program was adopted by deputies in the Russian parliament, and I actually find it a little bizarre to hear statements that someone can prevent a constitutional body from implementing its decisions. I find this bewildering, to say the least.

[Stefanov] Valentin Sergeyevich, today's economic policy of the present government is being criticized. People are also putting forward policies of their own. What comment do you have on this economic policy, which is being proposed by the Russian government among others?

[Pavlov] You know, the point is that we, as the new Cabinet of Ministers which is still only being formed—it has not yet been formed, by the way, and the country's parliament has not yet passed or even considered the program of the new cabinet—we simply cannot in that sense oppose the program of the Russian Government with our own. On the contrary, we'd like to find a common understanding but our view is, strictly speaking, based on one simple thing—that the main aim today is to stabilize production and find ways of boosting production.

We'd like everyone to understand today that the route to improving the lives of the population lies in real actions in the sphere of material production. Thus the main thing is that today we must focus our attention on the pivotal elements of our structural policy. That is where the key lies—in the basic industries like metallurgy, transport, the chemical industry, and agriculture. That is where we must seek a solution to our problems. But we must not just bank on distribution relations in these industries. Distribution is a very powerful instrument to stimulate production but it cannot replace production on its own and it cannot do away with it. So these matters have to be dealt with by using the market and other instruments inherent in the market in the distribution sphere in order to increase work motivation, and motivation for the use of scientific and technical progress and its attainments, and motivation for the most sensible use of what we have in the production sphere.

If we view our tasks from this angle, I think we won't have any contradictions. But how can we say anything today about sharing land when sowing is on the agenda, and when we have not sorted out matters like potatoes, for instance? We cannot seriously go along with the affirmations of certain leaders who say that they will base their action program on the way the mayor of London goes about his job. He doesn't get involved with tomatoes and potatoes, so why should we? If we embark on that route and forget about our own circumstances, we'll just have more of the same.

[Stefanov] That is, it is necessary first of all to proceed on the basis of one's real possibilities?

[Pavlov] Well, how else? The time has not come when the peasants have to take seed potatoes from the state stocks in order to sow potatoes. At this time usually 2 million tonnes of seed potatoes go for sowing. At present the peasants have taken only 300,000 tonnes. Why? Because they have the bitter experience that 2.5 million tonnes of potatoes remained unharvested. As a result the market price of potatoes in Moscow is 6 rubles [R] a kilogram. This is an obvious fact.

Therefore, one should clearly wonder whether the program we advocated in the autumn is the right program. If this program is to our liking, well all right. Only I personally will not undertake to fulfill such a program. I think that today we must come to an agreement immediately, before setting off, that towns dwellers will harvest potatoes for themselves. We cannot allow ourselves once again to leave 5 million tonnes of grain crops unharvested and disappearing under the snow. Then we will have to buy almost 40 million tonnes of grain abroad. Where is the money? Today, for this we have to give, in practical terms, oil. There is nothing else to give. Oil and gold. That is all we have left. But we have

reduced the extraction of oil as a result of all of these discussions and confrontations. To lose 60 million tonnes of oil production in one year, that is... excuse me but no economy except ours could withstand such blows.

[Stefanov] Valentin Sergeyevich. Yesterday's interview also criticized the measures to reform the pricing system. It also touched on, and in quite harsh tones, the system of compensation which the Cabinet of Ministers proposes. I think that television viewers have a rather confused impression of the pricing system which is proposed by the union and the prices and compensation system which Russia is proposing. Could you in some way comment on these two systems and compare them?

[Pavlov] You know, I would not like to reply in the same tone comrade Yeltsin did in the interview. Nonetheless I cannot fail to remind our citizens in this case about something that not many people know—that the overall question of retail prices arose at the end of the 1970s. The new retail prices and pricing reforms were prepared and practicaly implemented in 1982.

At that time there were already new retail price lists. They were not only prepared but printed and distributed too. Indeed who should be aware of this if not Comrade Yeltsin? When he was a Central Committee member and first secretary of Sverdlovsk Oblast party committee he indeed possessed all the directives with which it must be assumed he was in agreement since at the time he did not for some reason protest against the retail price increases and their implementation. To say now that Pavlov or someone on his team has decided to revise prices—well, I find it at any rate embarrassing to answer this question.

The whole point is that in general the objective need for pricing reform in the transition to the market is growing. This is known not only by myself and Comrade Yeltsin and his closest assistants. It is not hard to cite, say, a pronouncement on this issue by, say, comrade Khasbulatov, his first deputy, in the press. True, at that time he was, I think, working at an institute and was in charge of a department, and he indeed very energetically urged pricing reform, free prices, and a shift to the market. What has happened now? What has suddenly changed? If we adopted the program for a transition to the market, everyone voted for it including comrade Yeltsin, who voted for it as a Supreme Soviet deputy. Why then have the liberalization of prices and the new pricing principles suddenly become the invention of some single individual?

Well, I can say that indeed the pricing reforms come logically as an essential element of a general system of market relations. There really cannot be a market if from above, from a single center or from several centers, you are set decreed prices at which you must sell your output. After all the price is an instrument for measuring, let us say, the quantitative and qualitative efficiency of your labor. Only the market can do this in the most rational way. Everyone realizes this and acknowledges it. Furthermore I would say this—that the pricing reforms at the present time stem from all the decisions that have been adopted incidentally by the congresses and supreme soviets including, incidentally, the Russian Federation's Supreme Soviet.

If one goes back to recall the 500 Days Program then, incidentally, pricing reforms were also envisaged there. It too stands as one of the points of departure.

It is another matter that today a great many what I would call subjective factors have started to be brought into this sphere of the economy. They are based not on economic solutions and not on economic logic, but on politicized decisions based on the logic of the position of the individual in implementing one economic measure or another. In this case comrade Yeltsin's position in essence distinctly corresponds to these factors. I can say today, perfectly frankly, that in preparing all the decisions on pricing reforms, both in the union and in the government, we acted over the past month synchronously with all the union republics. All the union republics, including the Russian Federation, sent three representatives to a group of union experts from the price committee, the Gosplan [State Planning Committee] and the Labor committee, that is each union republic. Therefore today's pricing reforms about which we are speaking, and about which I reported to the Supreme Soviet deputies, and twice reported at the Federation Council, are a result of collective work, collective work.

It is quite another matter that a clear, on the one hand, confrontation has developed today in the republics, caused by the fact that from the old administrative price set-up they have come to a situation where in our country those who make the end product today—with freeing prices—will obtain additional incomes. But those republics which manufacture the raw materials and all the equipment and components for these articles will incur greater expenditures. I don't think there is any secret here. The main labor which has been put, say, into this furniture on which you and I are sitting is by no means the labor of a furniture factory. It is labor starting with the timber cutters at the timber felling area, those who have felled the timber, then those who have brought it out, those who have sawn it and dried it out. The furniture factory is the end of the line. So we cannot consider that all the income obtained from a change in retail prices is the profit of the furniture factory. What is being done for our timber cutters? It is they who will be paying higher prices. So we must view this question in light of fairly distributing the difference in prices.

So what is, say, this same Kazakhstan to do today? It imports 45 percent of consumer goods from other republics. At the same time it exports 90 percent of its metal, bauxite, and ferrous metals and coal. And what is to happen to the coal miners and metal workers? Are they only to pay, then? We must give them compensation, bearing in mind that this compensation should come from those sources which receive this production where

these goods will be produced on the basis of a calculation of the proportion of labor input along the whole technological chain.

But the Russian Federation as one of the exporting republics has embarked on this path: let prices be raised—and by the way everyone agrees with this, including the Russian Federation, with raising prices, no one disagrees with this. So why does Comrade Yeltsin say that these are Pavlov's prices, although he does not object to them? He does not object to a single one of the prices. Moreover, I can say that the Russian Federation has officially made this statement: In a few places we are not in agreement with the prices, we have complaints about a few of the prices, but for the sake of overall agreement we are waiving our objections. That is how matters stand with prices.

As far as compensation, they say: Do not interfere, we will decide for ourselves. Well, first, the question arises, what does it mean? —We will decide for ourselves. We have a single economic space which we speak about. This presupposes that in it there should be a single principle not only for pricing but also the basis for these principles is equal pay for equal work. Prices are based on the quantity and quality of labor. And we wish to tear these two principles apart. On what basis? Well, the answer is very simple. The Russian Federation has officially stated that they cannot agree with us since they do not accept the scale of compensation which is laid down in our decisions.

We had a uniform view on minimum compensation. We say that as a minimum a worker needs R60. The Russian Federation thinks that he needs R40. Why? They think very simply that it is necessary to provide compensation only for foodstuffs and children's goods. All the rest should not be compensated for.

[Stefanov] So the union government is proposing more compensation?

[Pavlov] In essence we believe that it is essential to construct compensation in a way that will ensure that this will not have the nature of a confiscatory reform. The very basis of the pricing reforms is to create the conditions for high productivity labor, to motivate labor, and not at all to take money off the population today. It does not take a lot of intelligence to do that. One can do it in a different way. One can simply set about raising prices without speaking about any price reforms.

Whereas here, in fact, we proposed a confiscation-type review of the level of prices, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, we proposed to leave all the republics which are situated beyond the borders face to face with their problems. Their prices will go up but they will not have money for compensation. It is no secret that all republics spoke twice unequivocally at the Federation Council, representatives of republics like Nazarbayev from Kazakhstan, Karimov from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and others, from republics which produce raw materials. They are saying: what are we supposed to do in such cases? How are we to deal with our population? They said straightforwardly that, after all, we have only one way to answer this development and to ensure the interests of our population, by raising prices for raw materials.

What will this lead to? This will lead to a new jump in prices and nothing else. Already today as a result of this...we need not make a secret of it. Do we not know this? Do we not see the fact that already on the eve of this and being aware of the Russian Federation position...just look, many of our towns have stocks of grain to last them only two to three days. Why? Because Kazakhstan does not permit the export of grain. Only after Gorbachev, the country's president, made a personal appeal to comrade Nazarbayev have they now started sending small amounts of grain to Central Asian republics and partly here, to the European part. After all, our main grain that we use to make bread, strong and hard wheat, is produced in Kazakhstan, and also along the Volga and in some other regions. But the main share falls on Kazakhstan. So Kazakhstan has started to keep grain and as a result you have a bread crisis. Uzbekistan has stopped sending cotton. It waits for your decision:" either you really behave like fraternal republics within a single national economic complex or it will not deliver cotton...

[Stefanov, interrupting] And it will be every man for himself.

[Pavlov] Yes every man for himself, it is no secret, after all, that here all...Ivanovo region, let us say, has been left without cotton. Cotton is lying idle over there while women have been left without work. This is a fact. A delegation from Ivanovo went to Uzbekistan recently and asked: Give us a chance to work.

Nevertheless, there are people there we must think about—and not pontificate. For this reason, such superficially inoffensive, so to speak, words—someone, something, they amount to very great losses for the country, and result in people's misfortunes. For this reason we say that we cannot approach it like this. If someone said that here there must be fraternity of the peoples, that we have a single area, a single economy—then it is necessary to be guided by this not just in words, but in deeds, too, including price formation issues and compensation issues.

Moreover, we view compensation not simply as, you know, a lifebelt. For we must in fact look—if we are to talk about the Russian Federation, then it would not harm them, incidentally, to sometimes look at the 500-days program a little more attentively. We are saying that the price formation reform is clearly linked to the reform of wages. For this reason the price formation reform clearly envisages the start of the reform of wages, as well. If you examine everything we are proposing today, then we in essence are proposing to reform wages in the nonproduction sphere, to bring them closer to the level of wages in the production sphere. This concerns education, health-care, adult education institutions, and

so on, that is, libraries. That is, to finally put all this sphere onto equal starting conditions, to solve this problem.

Apart from this, we envisage that in the production sphere we view the Center's future role as being an body determining the minimum wage. That is, if you hire someone, then you must know that as a minimum he costs such an amount, let's say R120. That's his minimum. In all events, if you hire someone, then you have to give him work for R120. If you can't—that's your problem. Pay up. But if you hire someone who names conditions, who says that because of his work, his qualifications, he costs a certain sum, let's say R500—you have to weigh up whether you need such a person or not. And you, as employer, must regulate what wages you will determine for such a person. And this must be determined, in the first place, by a contract system. In principle, on the whole, all this must be regulated by agreements between production heads and the unions. That is, there must be an agreement between bodies and organizations, so to speak, representing the worker's interests on the one hand, and the interests of the employer on the other.

The government is able, and is obliged, to carry out only one regulating function, to establish the minimum level, proceeding from the minimum living wage, from the basket of consumer goods and the prices existing in the country. It should check that this minimum consumer budget is ensured via wages. And it is logical that all this should naturally be linked with the level of pensions, grants, child benefits, and so on. That is our understanding. But our understanding is that a pensioner is a pensioner wherever he is. We do not differentiate over where he worked, as is happening in some places in our country. For example, if you did not work two thirds of your working life in Lithuania, then you will not get a pension. We cannot support such policies.

I do not know whether the Russian Federation has yet reached such a level of understanding of sovereignty, but it is logically very close to it because it has set about creating a republican pension fund, and has said it does not intend to participate in the all- Union pension fund. How is one to understand this? Everyone knows that if you look at the map for the north of our country, for example, you know it is mainly miners working there. These are people who were born and raised in the Donbass and Belorussia. They work there for 15 to 20 years and then return to their homeland to live. Who is going to pay their pensions? Or take the oilworkers in Tyumen oblast. Anyone who has been there knows that among the oilworkers the overwhelming majority are people from Azerbaijan, Bashkiria, and Tataria. They live and work there for 20-25 years in tyumen oblast. Who is going to pay their pensions?

And are there going to be different pensions? Can one apply such a method? Have we now reached the stage of having different pay for the same labor, depending on one's nationality and place of birth? Can we really do this? We proceeded from the basis that our Constitution guarantees equal rights in this sphere. Therefore, we considered that with an equal approach, an equivalent should be ensured in the sphere of pricing, in the sphere of payment for labor, its social protection throughout the territory, since we speak about a single state, a single economic space, and in general we say that we have a Union, a Union.

[Stefanov] Valentin Sergeyevich, yesterday's interview touched on the question of the well-known R140 billion. In this connection, Boris Nikolayevich said that it would be interesting to know the fate of whole hundreds—and if I am not mistaken—of tonnes of gold, which in some miraculous way disappeared from the Union somewhere abroad. Could you please elucidate the route of this gold?

[Pavlov] My God, you know, this reminds me of some fairy tale from Sheherezade, or something of that type. What sort of revelation is this, and particularly from Comrade Yeltsin? The USSR is one of the largest producers of gold, one of the largest producers of diamonds. We are second or third in the world for the volume of such production.

Excuse me, but in this respect gold is no different than any other commodity. It is purely a currency commodity that we have used at all times.

[Stefanov] Not just now.

[Pavlov] Not just now. Tsarist Russia was a supplier of gold on the world market. I rather think that in general only the Republic of South Africa supplies more than us. It is at present being mined in China, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Well, there is altogether no secret about this. The whole world knows approximately who extracts how much, although it is a commercial secret for everyone. We never make this thing public, as you will yourself understand, simply because we are guided by the Leninist principle that one should sell at as high a price as possible. Therefore, since we are one of the major producers we never publicize our entries on to the world market and the quantities that we sell. Well, you will yourself understand that if you simply begin coming out with a large quantity right away you can, through a reduction in prices, get, quite simply, fleeced. For this reason we endeavour not to publicize our currency reserves and not to present our general view. The authorized persons will find out.

In this regard our country has an unfavorable balance of payments. We are net importers for many types of goods. For probably about the past 10 years now we have in effect been unable to feed ourselves. This has been stated repeatedly from the loftiest rostrums and I do not want to repeat it here today. But Comrade Ryzhkov has even already specified what proportion of our food ration we import from abroad. In this respect gold has always been a means to pay for food deliveries to our country.

If Comrade Yeltsin is very interested in what happened to 200 tonnes of gold last year, I can disillusion him. Last

year we obtained money not for 200 tonnes but for 234 tonnes, and we obtained—now, since it is a thing of the past I can openly make it public, although it is generally well-known on all the international exchanges for the sale of gold and is no secret—we indeed sold 234 tonnes and obtained 1.638 billion foreign currency rubles.

And this money has entered the accounts of the Soviet Government and the Foreign Economic Bank. All this can be revealed because there is no secret about it. If necessary, this bank can give you a copy, any deputy can see it. There are no secrets here, just as there are no secrets as to what they were spent on. When I heard this broadcast—well, I knew generally speaking where this money had been sent—well I just asked for my own interest simply so that I knew roughly what the amount was. I simply made a note of it. I can say that of this money we spent R1.630 billion on purchases. We bought 942,000 tonnes of meat and meat products for which we paid R866 million. We bought 95,000 tonnes of dried milk for which we paid R119 million. We bought 266,900 tonnes of butter for which we paid R325 million. We bought 880,000 tonnes of vegetable oil for which we paid R320 million. But this is just a portion. We also bought foodstuffs apart from this for the sale of oil and petroleum products. But I have already reminded you in our conversation that it would have been desirable perhaps for us at that time to give up less gold in order to pay for these purchases. It would have been desirable. But a fall of 60 million tonnes in the volume of oil extraction faced us with the harsh need to sell gold. If we had not sold it then, you see, we would either have had to tighten our belts or...

[Stefanov, interrupting] I see what you mean. Valentin Sergeyevich, my last question. In yesterday's interview this motif of a confrontation between the union and Russia between the union leadership and the Russian leadership, came through very clearly. What would you like to say about this. How, for example, did the USSR people's deputies react to this today, to this interview and precisely to this motif of confrontation?

[Pavlov] You know, I don't want to paint over this problem altogether. Confrontation is present. It is based on one point, on the fact that here today unfortunately the theory of giving lower power bodies, legislation and decisions priority over higher ones has gained mass currency, generally speaking. The Russian Federation, and all other republics think that their laws must be higher than union laws. Here there is simply a lack of regulation on this issue. Something must be delegated to the union if we recognize it as a sovereign state, that the union is not simply a society of lovers of Russian literature, but a state. So priority in the sphere of delegating rights must belong to the union, and the other sphere which is left to the republics, then this must be determined by the republics. But the lack of regulation on this - this anecdotal incident is probably known to you from Krasnopresenskiy Rayon when it announced its own airspace. This is a well-known fact, but it is not the only one.

You know, here in the country unfortunately there are very many such things. For this reason I can say that this confrontation proceeds from one very dangerous point. You know, I for example evaluate that in this event comrades, including, I think, Comrade Yeltsin, are trying to change the substance of perestroyka and the substance of the transfer to the market economy.

The fact is that we, when we talk about the market, on freeing initiative, people's interest in improving the results of work—all the time we spoke about relations, on the freedom of the producer and the consumer directly. When we talk about horizontal links we say a factory with factories, with shops, with people as purchasers on the market. This is what we have talked about today always when we understood the word market, when we spoke about freedom of enterprise—giving the possibility of direct contacts and the establishment of direct economic ties. Here the priority is in horizontal ties. These allow us to find a more optimal structure of links and, correspondingly, an optimal structure of production in comparison with the one which formed through the administrative- command system on the principal of downward and upward and vice- versa. Here the change of upward and downward links to horizontal foundations is rational and everybody understands this. From here come all our laws on state enterprises, enterpreneurialism, and so on, and everything necessary for the creation of a market infrastructure.

Today attempts are constantly being made to thrust on us something completely different. Attempts are being made to thrust polycentrism on us, that is instead of one center, to thrust on us numerous centres. At first it was 15 centers, now things have advanced further to 56 centers, if you include the autonomous areas here.

After them, there are, for example, 73 krays and oblasts in the Russian Federation. In addition to them, there are other republics. Then, after them, there are the rayons. Appearing in each of them is their own autonomy and their own priorities. What then is the producer to do?

The producer now—if one speaks to the manager of an enterprise—quite often collides with the system that exists for them, namely the state order, in the sense that we have been speaking about, plus the repubican state order, plus the oblast state order, plus also the wishes of the rayon soviets. As a result, he has a double program. He no longer knows which program to fulfill. He has the state order all the time, but what about the market?

In this situation, one already gets into a position where Leopold the cat [cartoon character] does not know where to go. As a result, there is no longer any question of discipline with deliveries or any kind of stable economic links. Either he fulfills nothing or else he does not give a damn about anything and, at his discretion, carries out the work that he considers advantageous to himself. This immediately starts to undermine all economic links. In this regard, we are, in effect, today openly observing not the issue of demonopolization and not the handover of

the rights of the owners to the control of work collectives but, indeed, the issue of nationalization. The republics are now declaring union-owned enterprises to be theirs. The oblasts say republican enterprises belong to them. There is, indeed, a beginning to this very confrontation. This confrontation will, of course, in the end bring about general destruction of the economy, on the one hand, including the severing of those ties that we have objectively been developing for decades in our national economy.

In our country, we have always said that we have a unified national, economic complex. Currently, we have approximately 5,500 enterprises—about 10 percent—which produce three-quarters of the industrial output. Indeed, we have very many enterprises that are truly unique. Take the fuel equipment works in Lithuania; take Dielektrik, in Moldavia; take Nairit, [production association] in Armenia; and so forth. I could enumerate a large number of such monopolies, where we have a sole works for the entire country. We always considered this an achievement because we made use of those advantages that exist in the monopoly method of production based on public ownership.

For yes, in fact, here in contrast to capitalism we lost due to the fact that we do not have competition. Socialist competing is not equivalent to competition. That is also true. But we had our advantages. We were able to use the division of labor—regional, in branches of industry—and concentration of capital. Incidentally, concentration of capital now throughout the whole world is in arms; look at what is happening from this point of view in Europe, in America. And we, through this, compensated for the absence of competition and always said that this is our advantage.

Today, we suddenly take that advantage that we had and have begun to reject it. We have begun to raise barriers. What are we to do in such a case? Build new factories? New Nairits? What do we do in this case? Have superfluous resources appeared in the country? Have we begun to live very well here and have nothing to do with our money? [question as heard] Or maybe we will think differently. Will we open the border so we will not have this monopolization? But everyone knows that the condition of our industry, in the first place, and agriculture from the point of view of the quality of our fixed assets, from the point of view of their age, the integration of scientific and technical progress in metal and plastics, is such that the majority of our industry will not survive competition. What do we want? To close it? To create an artificial army of unemployed? Why do we want to do this?

And you always begin to think after such loud statements on...[changes thought] What about the man? Does he do this consciously? Then, in the name of what? Why doesn't he speak the truth? Before announcing this, then, it is necessary to say so openly. Why should someone have to decipher what lies behind my announcement? It must be done openly and said: Yes, we want to modernize our industry. How will this be paid? Fine, it has to be paid for with unemployment, and a German has to be paid as boss. Let him come and command. If we've come to this, then let's say openly to our people that we, ourselves, can't conduct industry, we need a German as manager. This has already occurred in the history of the Russian state. If we want to return to that, then let's. I, for example, do not personally agree with this. Therefore, confrontation, as such, is today formulated in the guise of various laws and decisions.

Look, the Russian Federation has adopted laws. Of them, not one coincides with all-union laws. Why? What is this done for? Why is it that the whole country is in step and yet only the Russian chairman believes he is the only one in step. So, not all the ends tie up here. I simply want people to understand me correctly. I, myself, as they say, am a Russian. I was born and grew up in Moscow.

My mother and father were born and grew up here. My grandfather and grandmother, it's true, were from Kalinin oblast, but to say that someone is more concerned about the Russian people than me, I consider simply, in this case, out of place. And just because my wife is Ukrainian—she was born in Zaporozhye—she is also, nevertheless, probably not an enemy of the Russian people. So, to measure who loves Russia and the Russian people more, I consider it simply out of place for a statesman, moreover one of such rank.

[Stefanov] Valentin Sergeyevich, thank you for the interview.

[Pavlov] Don't mention it, if it helps things.

Kravchuk, Nazarbayev Deplore Yeltsin Remarks

PM2102103191 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 21 Feb 91 First Edition p 1

[Report on statements by Kazakh SSR President N.A. Nazarbayev and L.M. Kravchuk, chairman of the Ukrainian SSR Supreme Soviet, at 20 February news conference in Alma-Ata by Colonel A. Ladin; carried under the rubric "Yesterday's Event: Assessments, Opinions": "No Time for Ultimatums"]

[Text] At the 20 February news conference in Alma-Ata about the signing of the cooperation treaty between the Ukrainian SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] and Kazakh SSR, KRASNAYA ZVEZDA reporter Colonel A. Ladin put the following question to Kazakh SSR President N.A. Nazarbayev and L.M. Kravchuk, chairman of the Ukrainian SSR Supreme Soviet:

"As is well known, a meeting of the top leaders of five republics—Russia, the Ukraine, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan—was held at the end of the recent Federation Council session. On the evening of 19 February we all witnessed the statement delivered on Central Television by B.N. Yeltsin. Is this statement by the

head of the Russian legislature connected with the results of the aforementioned meeting? Do you share B.N. Yeltsin's position regarding the country's president?"

We publish the answers given by the republics' leaders.

Leonid Makarovich Kravchuk, chairman of the Ukrainian SSR Supreme Soviet:

All the republics whose heads took part in the aforementioned conference have concluded treaties among themselves. It is now very important to keep track of how these treaties are being fulfilled and to organize monitoring. That is the first reason why we met immediately after the Federation Council session.

But since the draft law on the Cabinet of Ministers had been presented at the Federation Council, this question was naturally also discussed. In our opinion, the proposed structure cannot satisfy the republics that have proclaimed their own sovereignty because the new draft law strengthens centralization even further than was the case under the former Council of Ministers.

Our meeting has nothing to do with Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's statement. Nothing of the sort was discussed there. The statement was Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's personal affair.

I, for instance, totally disagree with the statement. I disagree because it was made at an extremely grave time for our people when we need to mobilize efforts, resources, and political wisdom to preserve the country, the people, and our state.

I disagree with this dictatorial statement. Whereby, according to the statement of one person, another must immediately resign. That is ridiculous. It is a question of the country's president, and this question can be resolved only within the constitutional procedure. Only on the basis of the existing laws.

I take full responsibility for my words and I say that Boris Nikolayevich's statement is rash. I categorically disagree with it, but at the same time there is something else that I have to say. Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev is the architect of perestroyka, the architect of the form of the Union of sovereign states. Now, however, we are seeing him begin to backtrack on his own statements under pressure either from right-wing or from left-wing forces.

I do not think this should happen today. The republics that have issued declarations of sovereignty will not abandon their chosen path. To ensure that this path is a common path, it is necessary to grasp that we are building a Union of sovereign states. This must be grasped both at the center and at local level. After all, it is not for nothing that people in the Ukraine can be heard to say today: Yes, we are living in a sovereign Ukraine, but for the present Moscow is unaware of this.

Kazakh SSR President Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev:

I am grateful to you for this question. The question you present is indeed probably the most discussed problem today, and we must express our precise and clear position. I want to take advantage of this opportunity to express my opinion about Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's statement to the people of Kazakhstan and to the whole country.

The consultations among the five republics pursued the most noble intentions aimed at preserving our state. It seems to us that an initiative by our mightiest republics that form the backbone of the Union, could be the motive for the adoption of a similar decision by other republics. Yeltsin too agreed with this. We all approached Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev together and proposed that he head this group of republics and on the basis of that principle embark on forming the new Union. This was discussed at our meetings, but then unworthy speculation about them began. Then, in response to these attacks, I received a mandate from the Kazakh SSR Supreme Soviet to continue the talks with the leading republics with the aim of preserving our state.

There was no mention of the fact that Yeltsin was intending to issue a statement or that he had such ideas during the meeting in question.

Now I come to the essence of the statement itself.

I will put it this way, I have complaints about Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev and the central leadership regarding irresolution, the weakening of power, and the failure to stop fratricidal interethnic conflicts. If power exists, it must be used for people's good. It is difficult when there is no one with whom to resolve vital questions, including economic questions. After all, it is because of the lack of executive power that we have been forced to conclude horizontal treaties.

I frankly spoke of my criticisms at the Congress of USSR People's Deputies. But there is no way I can agree with what Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin said on television. At this crucial moment, when we are experiencing an economic crisis, Yeltsin is essentially organizing a political crisis also. I can say that bluntly. We are moving toward a rule-of-law state. If that is so, the question of the president can be decided only by the Congress of USSR People's Deputies, which elected him. Or if Mikhail Sergeyevich himself raises this question. To call on all the country's peoples to demand this—that cannot be acceptable. A clear stance must be adopted in this regard. Now is not the time for us to be doing this. We must think about how we can improve the situation in the economy, how we can improve people's living standard, and how we can make market relations effective.

Summing up everything I have said, I want to say: I totally dissociate myself from the calls for the resignation of the country's president made by B.N. Yeltsin and from his remarks about distrust of M.S. Gorbachev.

Shevardnadze To Head Foreign Policy Association

Views Foreign, Domestic Issues

LD2002183691 Moscow TASS in English 1824 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS diplomatic correspondents Leonid Timofeyev and Georgiy Shmelev]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—Former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was elected president of the Foreign Policy Association today.

At a constituent assembly here, representatives of over thirty prestigious Soviet organisations, diplomats, scientists and cultural figures approved a charter of the new non-governmental organisation and elected its leading bodies.

Shevardnadze addressed the gathering with remarks about the association's goals and tasks.

The country's integration into the world economic system and its inclusion into the world economic, financial, scientific, technological, information, cultural and legal environment would be the major direction in the foreign policy association's activity, Shevardnadze told the meeting.

The former foreign minister emphasised that the new non- governmental organisation plans to promote research and establish research centres to study most topical issues of foreign policy and international cooperation.

This approach contains "a strong pragmatic core" of the association, oriented at tangible results and public benefit, he said.

Shevardnadze stressed that the new organisation does not oppose itself to the foreign ministry or other departments. It favours principles of new political thinking, dialogue on major issues of world development and concerted actions in handling global problems facing mankind.

"We do not give up criticism," he said. "We will not keep silent when we will see a departure from the policy of new political thinking. We will not keep silent when we will encounter attacks on accomplishments of the USSR's new foreign policy."

The association will independently appraise foreign policy decisions and express its stance on international developments without claiming that it is infallible and knows it all.

Shevardnadze voiced readiness to cooperate with commissions and deputies of the USSR Supreme Soviet and republican parliaments.

The association attaches importance to facilitating the understanding of the policy of new thinking abroad, since this is a policy that can only be pursued throughout concerted efforts.

The aim of the new organisation is "to become an institution that enjoys authority and weight both inside the country and the world at large", he remarked.

Speaking at a news conference after the constituent assembly of the new association, Shevardnadze described the Soviet policy on the Persian Gulf settlement as "irreproachable".

He expressed support for the Soviet leadership's diplomatic and political efforts to end hostilities in the Gulf.

In his opinion, everything that was being done by the Soviet Union towards that end was a continuation of the peace policy pursued by the country since the first day of the conflict.

Shevardnadze said that the latest Soviet initiatives had been worked out "roughly on January 10-11 this year, but were not implemented for organisational reasons". Shevardnadze did not comment on the latest "Gorbachev plan" since he said he did not know its content.

The former foreign minister stressed the need to continue dialogue with Iraq and display tolerance and restraint "if there is even only one chance to succeed" since the point at issue is human life.

He said that the international community's concern over the growing loss of life among Iraq's civilian population was justified. At the same time Shevardnadze drew attention to the fact that "the subject of casualties of the tiny Kuwaiti people has been moved to the background".

Shevardnadze refused to comment on Boris Yeltsin's television interview on Tuesday, in which the Russian president demanded the resignation of Mikhail Gorbachev, "since he was not fully familiar" with the statement.

In his view, it is "necessary to put an end to the war of parliaments, laws and, now, presidents". "It is necessary to think about the people, about the destiny of democracy," he said.

Shevardnadze emphasised that the two leaders "should muster enough strength to resolve their contradictions".

Describing at the request of journalists the domestic situation, Shevardnadze observed that "if the processes of destabilisation continue, the threat of dictatorship or civil war will remain real."

These processes should be stopped at any cost, he said.

Shevardnadze favoured a "stable Soviet Union", which meets the interests of Soviets and all people on earth.

Speaking about the forthcoming meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Political Consultative Committee, Shevardnadze

expressed the view that "national interests will not be ignored" as a result of the expected dismantling of the Warsaw Pact's military structures.

TV Reports Election

LD2002212191 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Report by correspondent S. Goryachev in Moscow; from the "Vremya" newscast]

[Excerpts] [Announcer] The constituent assembly of the Foreign Policy Association was held in Moscow today. Eduard Amvrosiyevich Shevardnadze was elected its chairman [title as heard].

[Goryachev] [passage omitted] Addressing the founders, Eduard Shevardnadze, the president of the Foreign Policy Association, stressed that behind the facade of today's discussions about Soviet foreign policy, there is a more important dispute, a dispute about what our state should be like and how it should live in the future. Eduard Shevardnadze said that democratic forces should unite and create a real, viable alternative to those who would like to turn society onto the road leading back to the past:

[Begin Shevardnadze recording] The association is not setting itself up in opposition to the Foreign Ministry or to any other departments or organisations. In general, it is not against anything in particular. It is for the principles of new political thinking, so to speak: That is the core direction of our activity. The association promotes the development of dialogue on highly important issues concerning the world situation and joint activity by everybody in tackling the global problems facing mankind.

We do not renounce criticism; we will not keep silent where we see a departure from the policy of new political thinking. We will not keep silent when we encounter attacks on the accomplishments of the new progressive Soviet foreign policy. [end recording]

Ryzhkov Released From Hospital; Future Unclear

LD2002180691 Moscow TASS in English 1749 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Andrey Orlov]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—"I feel fine and my spirits are just as high," the former head of government, Nikolay Ryzhkov, told TASS on the first day following his discharge from hospital after a long illness.

Ryzhkov today left the Barvikha health centre in the Moscow region where he underwent a course of rehabilitation after a heart attack on the night of December 25-26, 1990.

In his first telephone interview after the attack he suffered at the height of political developments three days before the conclusion of the 4th Congress of People's Deputies, Ryzhkov refused to discuss his plans.

"Anyway, I will need rest," he said. "Doctors also insist on that."

Following the adoption of amendments to the constitution at the 4th congress, the structure of executive government has undergone drastic changes. The post of chairman of the Council of Ministers, which Ryzhkov formally held, was abolished, and the Council of Ministers itself was transformed into a cabinet under direct presidential control.

Former Finance Minister Valentin Pavlov was confirmed in the new post of prime minister.

Ryzhkov's future remains unclear since no official announcement has been made that would relieve him of his duties, appoint him to a new job or pension him off.

Briefing Views CPSU's 'Embarrassing Situation'

LD2002153591 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1352 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Aleksandr (Baklanov) report]

[Text] A news conference was held this morning in the CPSU Central Committee press center by Nikolay Yefimovich Kruchina, administrator of CPSU Central Committee affairs. Our diplomatic correspondent Aleksandr (Baklanov) attended.

[(Baklanov)] Lamenting that the administrator of affairs had never enjoyed such attention from journalists, and that, today, his was an unaccustomed role, Comrade Kruchina described the embarrassing situation in which the CPSU Central Committee administration of affairs has found itself. The fact is that following the change in the scale of party membership dues and the loss of a number of publications, the CPSU Central Committee is over 1.5 billion rubles [R] short; there is a shortfall of R600 million because of the reduction in the total of party dues, R100 million because of the fall in party membership, and up to R1 billion because of the situation with the press. Many youth publications are no longer under Central Committee control—VECHERNYAYA MOSKVA and VECHERNIY LENINGRAD and a number of others—which are, as Comrade Kruchina pointed out, mainly highly profitable publications. It is rather strange to hear laments about material embarrassments when one is in the fashionable building of the Oktyabrskaya Hotel. No other political party has such a building, nor, perhaps, does Inturist, either.

Comrade Kruchina also announced that today the official reaction of the CPSU Central Committee to Yeltsin's speech yesterday is expected, and that he personally categorically condemns that speech, both in form and content and in time.

Journalists were also told at the news conference that Comrade Pryakhin, the former head of the CPSU Central Committee press center, has been confirmed advisor [referent] to the USSR president. Our listeners may judge for themselves whether that counts as promotion or not, but we shall congratulate comrade Pryakhin on his new post.

Gorbachev Meeting With Trade Union Leaders

PM2002215091 Moscow TRUD in Russian 21 Feb 91 p 1

[TRUD political observer V. Golovachev report: "The Trade Unions' Chief Argument: USSR President's Meeting With Leaders of the Country's Trade Unions"]

[Excerpts] The second meeting between USSR President M.S. Gorbachev and trade union leaders took place by mutual agreement in the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium hall of sessions in the Kremlin on 19 February. V.S. Pavlov, prime minister of the USSR, V.P. Shcherbakov, chairman of the USSR General Confederation of Trade Unions [GCTU], and leaders of sector, republic, and other regional associations of trade unions took part in the meeting. [passage omitted]

M.S. Gorbachev opened the meeting. The USSR president stressed that without a reform of pricing there can be no progress. Price reform is a very sensitive matter that affects everyone's interests. Therefore the approach here is this: 100-percent compensation on food, 100-percent compensation on a range of basic industrial goods. This leaves out costly furs, delicatessen products, and other luxury goods. In all, compensations will amount to 85 percent of the total increase in retail prices. It is very important for the people to understand, to believe, that the reform is not based on a confiscatory approach.

"We are weak on trust at the moment," M.S. Gorbachev observed, "and you should bear in mind that the people sitting in front of you know this situation very well. What we are seeing now is not a wave of trust, but a wave of distrust, doubt... Some people are suggesting that a different government is needed..."

But even in these complex conditions the country's leadership has enabled the discussion of the price reform to take place openly. The question of preemptive compensations is also being discussed. This, let us stress, was one of the proposals put forward by the trade unions at the first meeting with the president, and as you can see it has been adopted.

At the present meeting, the trade union leaders put forward specific comments on the draft presidential decree "On the Reform of Retail Prices and Social Protection for the Population." GCTU Chairman V.P. Shcherbakov stressed that the proposed reform can only be carried out given full preemptive compensation to the population for the increased cost of food and basic nonfood goods and services, but also given the implementation of measures to restrain the growth of contractual prices. However, in the opinion of the trade unions, the draft documents that have been drawn up do not fully meet these demands, and therefore need substantially amending.

The main principle is not being adhered to—that of full compensation for increased prices for basic goods and services. It is proposed, in particular, to increase wage rates and salaries by at least 60 rubles a month. But this compensates (at the most modest calculations) only for the increased cost of food products, and will not make up for citizens' additional expenditure on the purchase of basic nonfood goods and services.

The central committees of a number of sector trade unions are insisting on a 70-100 percent increase in wage rates and salaries in connection with the implementation of the price reform.

The materials submitted provide for compensation on by no means all basic goods. The list does not include, for instance, bread, fancy baked products and rolls, rusks, cookies, icecream, mineral water...

V.I. Shcherbakov, chairman of the USSR State Committee for Labor and Social Questions, gave information to the effect that bread, in particular, is not specified on the list because payments are calculated on the basis of flour, including the flour from which bread is baked.

"But just imagine, people see that bread is not on the list of goods for which compensation is to be paid," the GCTU chairman said, standing his ground. "How are people going to react?"

"The trade unions are absolutely right about this," M.S. Gorbachev supported him. "Bread should certainly be on the list. After all, people distinguish clearly between bread and flour..." [passage omitted]

Concluding the meeting, M.S. Gorbachev said that the implementation of the pricing reform is possible only on the basis of consensus. Some people want to "inflame" the people nowadays. They are destructive people, they have no positive program. Their only aim is to cause a unionwide scandal so as to achieve their own ambitious goals. But today it is very dangerous to rock the boat.

The president's speech devoted great attention to the future of our Union. If we accept disintegration, we accept destruction. We cannot divide ourselves successfully at present, Mikhail Sergeyevich stressed. I am convinced of that. If we start redrawing borders, civil war will be inevitable. The hotbeds exist already. Because the conflicts that exist are hotbeds of war. To find an opportunity to pool efforts—that is the politicians' task.

The USSR president dwelt on concrete questions raised during the meeting. All the observations and proposals will be thoroughly analyzed. Touching on the trade unions' demands for the introduction in the near future

of a mechanism for indexation of the population's income (straight after the decision on compensation in connection with the price reform), Mikhail Sergeyevich confirmed that such a procedure is now proposed, and gave corresponding instructions to the USSR Cabinet of Ministers.

The problems of social insurance, the president stressed, are so important that it makes sense to discuss them at a joint session of the Federation Council, the Cabinet of Ministers, and trade union leaders. Such a meeting was organized. [passage omitted]

'Soyuz' Preview 23 February Moscow Rally

PM2002142391 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 20 Feb 91 Union Edition p 7

[Report by V. Litovkin: "Rally on Manege Square"]

[Text] A press conference dedicated to the rally planned for Moscow's Manege Square on 23 February was held 19 February in the USSR Supreme Soviet House conference hall at 27 Prospekt Kalinina.

As journalists were told by members of the rally organizing committee, the rally is being held on the initiative of the "Soyuz" deputies' group, the Moscow city committees of the CPSU and the All-Union Lenin Communist Youth League, the city Council of War and Labor Veterans, the Moscow Trade Union Federation, the Khrunichev plant's labor collective council, the Moscow Military District Political Directorate, and other social organizations. The application to stage the meeting was submitted to the Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee in good time.

"Our rally," Anatoliy Chekhoyev, USSR people's deputy and a member of the "Soyuz" deputies' group, said, "is aimed at supporting a renewed and integrated Union and wants civil peace and accord and the unity of the Army and the people but is against nationalism, separatism, and extremism."

Results of Poll on KGB, Economic Crime Issued

91UF0488A Moscow ARGUMENTY I FAKTY in Russian No 7, Feb 91 p 7

[Unattributed INTERFAX report]

[Text] According to the results of an all-Union survey conducted in January by the All-Union Center for the Study of Public Opinion, which included 2,016 residents of urban and rural areas in 21 regions of the country, 49 percent of respondents believe that bringing the KGB into combating economic sabotage and its control over the distribution of "humanitarian aid" "will help get things in order in the country."

One of every four respondents believe that the "KGB is doing something where it does not belong," and approximately one in eight (12 percent) fear that "it will lead to unjustified expansion of the KGB's influence." Fourteen percent had no opinion.

Recent Gorbachev Writings 'Blacklisted'

PM2002173991 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 16 Feb 91 p 6

[Report by S. Burlaku: "Leaders on 'Blacklist'"]

[Text] Krasnoyarsk Kray—The phonecall was stunning, like the monetary reform:

"A letter has arrived from Moscow at the book trading organizations of Krasnoyarsk Kray. It says: Withdraw and destroy all stocks of the works of M.S. Gorbachev! What is this—the beginning of a state coup?" the voice at the other end of the line gasped.

In the firm conviction that all this was a stupid practical joke, I nevertheless set off for the nearest book trading organization—the kray's Union of Consumer Trade Cooperatives—the working people's alarm signals must be investigated.

"Yes, there is such a letter."

Indeed, nothing could be simpler: "In accordance with the letters from the All-Union Association "Soyuzkniga" No. 19-5/2056-38 of 5 December 1990 and Political Publication No. 2/1006 of 22 November 1990, we recommend the withdrawal of the literarature of the publishing house specified on the enclosed list. The sale of the indicated literature is not possible in connection with changes in the internal life of the country and international circumstances..."

So, what are they proposing to burn on the "inquisition bonfire"? "On the Visit of M.S. Gorbachev to Poland in 1988" and his visits to Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. "M.S. Gorbachev. Revolutionary Perestroyka—the Ideology of Renewal, 1986." "M.S. Gorbachev. On the Party's Nationalities Policy in Contemporary Conditions. Moscow 1989." "M.S. Gorbachev. On the Basic Guidelines of the USSR's Domestic and Foreign Policy. Report to the Congress of USSR People's Deputies 30 May 1989." "M.S. Gorbachev. Perestroyka—The Vital Struggle of the People, 1987." "Going Firmly Along the Road of Perestroyka and the Deepening of Democracy. Collection of Materials on M.S. Gorbachev's Visit to Latvia and Estonia in 1987"...

In all there are 30 works by the same Mikhail Sergeyevich on the list.

The works of V.A. Kryuchkov, Ye.K. Ligachev, V.A. Medvedev, and N.I. Ryzhkov have also ended up on the "blacklist." The materials of the CPSU Central Committee Plenums for the last five years and the materials of the 19th Party Conference are being withdrawn.

What is this? The first alarm bell? Or are we simply continuing to drive history into today's version of the procrustean bed? In that case it is time to set up the "Ministry of Truth."

Medics Postpone Strike After Deputies' Move

PM2102103591 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 14 Feb 91 Union Edition p 3

[Report by S. Berestov: "Medics' Strike Postponed"; last paragraph is IZVESTIYA "postscript"]

[Text] We were told at the Moscow City Committee of the Medical Workers Trade Union that the Moscow medics' strike scheduled for 14 February was being postponed for 10 days. Later, at the USSR Supreme Soviet Committee for the Protection of the People's Health, a joint conference of USSR, Russia, and Moscow City Soviet people's deputies was held with the leaders of health care for the country and the city of Moscow.

A decision was adopted to allocate a subsidy to the pharmacy network, the medical industry, and the population. The overall minimum amount of the subsidy for 1991 will total 9.8 billion rubles [R]. Of this, approximately R4.8 billion will be required for import purchases. This money has been allocated from the union budget. A USSR Cabinet of Ministers decision to repay debts to foreign firms has been prepared. The figure is not small: The Ministry of the Medical Industry alone owes its foreign partners 118 million foreign currency rubles.

The question of the wages of physicians and other medical personnel and of qualified pharmacists and pharmaceutical chemists will be resolved in the very near future.

The question of the wages of medical higher educational institution staff was also raised.

Wages will be increased at the expense of local budgets.

Some 65 percent of Moscow's general health establishments had responded to the appeal to participate in the 14 February strike. What will happen in 10 days' time? In any event USSR Deputy Health Minister A. Moskvichev is not against the strike. "There seems to be no other way to draw attention to the resolution of our problems," he said.

On 12 February, IZVESTIYA own correspondent A. Pashkov reports, medics at Sverdlovsk's No. 24 Hospital staged a 24-hour warning strike. The strikers' demands are the same as the Muscovites'.

Economic

Prices Committee Chairman Views Price Reform

LD2002225691 Moscow TASS in English 1648 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—Price hikes in the Soviet Union in 1990 amounted to 5.3 per cent. If the "black market" is included, they went up six to seven per cent, Chairman of the Soviet State Committee for Prices Vyacheslav Senchagov said today.

Senchagov today met Soviet and foreign correspondents in connection with the forthcoming price reform in the Soviet Union.

The government's position is that maximum price limits be set for basic necessities determining living conditions of the population, along with corresponding money compensation, Senchagov said. In addition to fixed prices, free prices will be introduced, embracing some 30 per cent of consumer goods, and there will also be partially controlled prices, he said.

While implementing the reform, republics can initiate prices lower than the limits introduced by the central government and corresponding to local conditions, Senchagov said.

Data Show Inflation Up, Output Down in 1990

PM1902151991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Feb 91 Union Edition p 2

[Commentary by M. Berger and V. Romanyuk: "Statistics and Our Commentary; Economic Recession: Bottom Not Touched Yet"]

[Text] For the first time since the war, the absolute fall in the rate of production growth became an official statistic in January 1989. However, as I. Pogosov, first deputy chairman of the USSR State Committee for Statistics [Goskomstat], noted at a 14 January news conference, this fact was established about one year late because enterprises managed to conceal the fall by tinkering with wholesale prices. The 1990 result was marked by another qualitative change in the state of the economy: Last year's growth was not simply slower than the year before, there was an actual reduction in the size of national income, too.

The trend is developing very rapidly: The fall in the volume of production over the year was 1.2 percent but this January it was down 4 percent compared with last year's figure. True, I. Pogosov did note that the deterioration was far "better" than the predictions made by some specialists who had warned us of a 15-20 percent decline last year. But this "achievement" is cold comfort, especially since, when answering IZVESTIYA's question of whether we have touched bottom in our economic decline and whether we can expect it to stop and even be

reversed, albeit slowly, Pogosov expressed the following opinion. The "bottom" is ahead of us and it is likely that this whole year will be very, very difficult for the economy.

What has influenced the achievement of the "negative success" and the trend toward prolonged recession in the national economy? Without dwelling on the well known causes (the inefficient structure of the economy, the scientific and technical backwardness, the lack of incentive, and so on and so forth), the USSR Goskomstat spokesman pointed to the long-standing confusion over prices. Many people expected them to rise and stopped concluding contracts.

Among the new causes of the economic recession—aggravated, as I. Pogosov said, by perestroyka—one should also mention the ruble's rapid depreciation and the [defense industry's] conversion, because the reduction in the volumes of military production, given its proportion, was bound to affect the general economic indicators.

Statisticians have recently devised an indicator of the rate of inflation, which, unfortunately, also provides scant consolation. Comparing January 1991 and January 1990, this indicator will be 17-20 percent according to Goskomstat's preliminary figures. Even compared with last December, prices rose by 4-6 percent. The year's results showed an especially sharp rise in the collective farm market—by 60 percent on average—while prices for meat and milk doubled. However, the rise of the population's incomes (23 percent compared with January 1990) was noticeably faster than expenditure on goods and services. It is also difficult to hope that the removal of 7-8 billion rubles [R] in the exchange of banknotes will ease the pressure on the consumer market exxerted by the R200 billion that are burning a hole in people's pockets.

The optimistic figure for the growth in commodity exchange over the past year—18.5 percent—has been achieved mainly by raising prices. At the same time, the production of fabrics, clothing, and footwear fell by 10-26 percent. Purchases of meat, milk, and eggs fell by 10-16 percent and the sale of fish products by 31 percent. A dangerous new shortage appeared—salt—although salt sales rose by 6 percent.

Answering IZVESTIYA's question of whether structural policy will change, I. Pogosov noted that in recent years the press has exploited with remarkable facility the thesis of the bankruptcy of the present economic structure with its bias toward Group "A". In principle this is true, but capital investments cannot be quickly and automatically switched from heavy industry to light industry. We have succeeded in the redistribution of resources, I. Pogosov believes, but now the increase in the production of goods has clashed with the lack of a base. The rate of growth of housing construction, which was unprecedentedly high until 1988, is now being held back by the lack of sanitary engineering equipment and other products from heavy industry, which was incapable of supporting the rapid development of Group "B". To the objection that a change in structural policy in favor of the heavy sectors again may have a negative effect on Group "A" itself, as its workers will have no incentive because of the lack of goods, I. Pogosov put forward what he called the following ideology of the production of goods and services. The need is not to reduce investments in Group "A" but to introduce scientific and technical progress, intensify production, and channel the resources thus saved into Group "B".

True, the director of the news conference agreed that calls to develop scientific and technical progress are as old as they have been unproductive. However, he expressed the hope that the new economic relations toward which we are moving will finally make intensification a reality.

It is hard to say how justified these hopes are, particularly when one is waiting for the economic recession to "bottom out" in the near or not so near future.

Price Committee Chairman Interviewed on Reforms

PM2002154991 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 16 Feb 91 First Edition p 1

[Interview with V. Senchagov, chairman of the USSR State Committee for Prices, by TASS correspondent N. Marunov; date and place not given; first paragraph is introduction: "Price Reform Inevitable"]

[Text] V. Senchagov, chairman of the USSR State Committee for Prices, reflects in conversation with TASS correspondent N. Marunov on the nature of the retail price reform in the context of the appeal by the leaders of the Moscow and Leningrad City Soviets regarding that measure.

[Senchagov] The question of reform has been discussed at Congresses of People's Deputies and sessions of the USSR Supreme Soviet. On 8 February the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Supreme Soviet—credit must be given to the deputies—adopted a decision of fundamental importance on price policy and social protection measures for the population. This decision recognized the inevitability of the reform of retail prices and, what is particularly important, stressed that it must be carried out as part of a unified statewide price policy. The appeal by Moscow and Leningrad City Soviet leaders is, as I understand it, in the same vein. I understand their concern. We are essentially dealing with the economics of the absurd: There are goods, but they are not being sold, because there are no new prices and there is no benefit in selling them at the old ones.

The need for price reform is realized by the majority of union republics. There are no disagreements at the level of specialists and leaders of economic departments. Certain divergences do occur at the level of political

leadership, but on the fundamental questions agreement has been reached, as noted at the Council of the Federation.

[Marunov] What measures are planned for the population's social protection?

[Senchagov] Along with the reform of prices there will essentially be a reform of labor remuneration and a review of wage rates and salaries. It is also proposed to compensate fully for the increase in the cost of basic foodstuffs, children's goods, many kinds of clothing and footwear, and a number of other industrial goods. It is planned to establish minimum supplements to wages, pensions, and benefits so that compensation is paid out from the very start in a well organized way. Retirees and students are to receive compensation before the introduction of the new prices.

[Marunov] But the increase in prices is already happening...

[Senchagov] Indeed, the rate of increase of prices for consumer goods doubled last year. Contract prices are growing particularly quickly and goods on kolkhoz [collective farm] markets are getting more expensive. Under the pressure of budget deficits local organs of power are deciding to raise prices, often in breach of existing legislation. This affects, for example, eggs and other foodstuffs.

[Marunov] In the new political conditions the center is deprived of room for maneuver in decisionmaking. Will it be possible to achieve mutual understanding with the republics on questions of reform?

[Senchagov] The center's task is to make decisions agreed with the republics which ensure the functioning of the unionwide market. Prices for sugar, say, should be related to prices for bread, meat, and so forth. This will make it possible to avoid speculation and an interrepublic "price war." Only collaboration between the republics and the center will make it possible to elaborate an overall price policy. A clear accord has been reached among the republics on this score.

[Marunov] Can you give a timetable for the implementation of the reform?

[Senchagov] Self-regulation of prices, as calculations show, cannot be implemented within a short period. The practice of applying contract prices in industry must be continued. But under state control. Reality must be reckoned with. And the reality is that new wholesale prices determine the potential for enterprises' self-development, including the potential for paying salaries. But the new retail prices should be in keeping with the new prices for raw and semifinished materials and equipment. Is there an alternative? The leaders of the Moscow and Leningrad City Soviets, who have already tasted all the delights of specific economics and have seen that the potential of their budgets is not boundless, answer that question. And to continue to maintain existing state prices for food it is necessary to increase the payment of budget subsidies. But their growth is the main cause of money emission, that is, of the imbalance in money circulation.

[Marunov] But won't the reform of prices amount to their being increased administratively?

[Senchagov] No, it is a matter of a comprehensive reform and a coordinated change in retail prices, labor remuneration, and subsidies. Retail prices for roughly 30 percent of consumer goods will be regulated on the basis of supply and demand and by agreement between the producer and the trade organizations. The list of goods on which there will be contract prices and prices regulated by the state by setting ceilings on their alteration has been agreed with all republics.

Officials Analyze Price Reform Options

PM2002142991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 16 Feb 91 Union Edition p 2

["Abbreviated version" of report by Ye. Yasin, department chief, and S. Aleksashenko, leading specialist of the Commission for Economic Reform: "On the Eve of the Reform of Retail Prices"]

[Text] The State Commission for Economic Reform regularly holds meetings of economic scientists at which government proposals for the transition to the market are subjected to expert assessment. The latest such discussion was devoted to the reform of retail prices. The final document of the discussion was submitted to the government. The item below is an abbreviated version.

Overall Assessment of the Situation

The experts have assessed the state of the Soviet economy as critical and in the initial phase of crisis. So far there is a slow decline for all the most important macroeconomic indicators. But the reserve of stability in the development of these processes is obviously being exhausted and in the very near future (six to 12 months) a rapid growth of the crisis should be expected. The experience of reforms in the East European countries shows that when the index of inflation goes into double figures (which happened in our country in December) then that is the harbinger of qualitative changes in the economic situation.

The experts see the main reason for the crisis, in addition to the natural difficulties of the transition to the market economy, in the very grave blunders in financial and prices policy in 1988-1990. The swelling of the money in circulation and the growth of the population's incomes while administrative control over prices was retained essentially led to the undermining of the money system, to a flight away from the ruble, to the development of exchange in kind and the development of bartering, undermining economic relations.

In agriculture, thanks to a whole series of steps by the union and republican authorities, a situation is taking shape reminiscent of the grain procurements crisis of 1929, when the countryside was overfilled with money.

According to expert assessments, in 1990 alone the Union's agro-industrial complex received various subsidies worth about 100 billion rubles [R]. An example here was set by Russia, which wrote off all debts from kolkhozes [collective farms] and state farms [sovkhozes]. This was a grave financial error which drove a very large breach in the country's financial system. Debts were written off not only from loss-making and weak farms and not only for old debts but also from those which had arisen literally the day before the writing off.

The channeling, in addition, of 15 percent of the republic's national income from the Russian budget into the agro-industrial complex (approximately twice as much as last year) creates a situation in which the majority of these enterprises are simply becoming uninterested in building up production volumes. The requirements of agricultural enterprises could be entirely satisfied through subsidies and the quota in the national income and that is probably why in 1991 there will be no boost in agricultural production and no increase in purchases, despite the development of private one-man farms. Rather we should expect a decline in this sphere.

As a whole the experts believe that a qualitatively different situation is taking shape in the country: Against the background of the decline in production suppressed inflation will gradually turn into open inflation.

Prices Reform: Wholesale and Purchase Prices

The reform of wholesale and purchase prices implemented as of 1 January was prepared for 1987-1988 in the old administrative spirit and set as its basic aim the overcoming of existing disproportions and the alteration of prices relationships. At the time it was seriously criticized for failing to envisage any changes in the price formation mechanism.

In the spring of 1990, while preparing the program, N. Ryzhkov's government again came up against the need for a prices reform. It turned out that there were no other options which had been studied. The new pension law was brought into line with prices of the 1988 model. In the spirit of the times a course was steered toward the partial liberation of prices and the old option was revived again.

But these changes will not make it possible to attain the aims set when elaborating the reform in 1987. The large proportion of free prices (up to 40 percent) will lead to the point where price disproportions will be restored within the next 15-20 months if the prices reform is not backed up by any other steps.

There is no doubt that the very grave financial situation in our country is caused to a considerable degree by the state's immoderate expenditure on price subsidies. Through the reform of retail prices alone it seemed possible to resolve financial problems, albeit only partially. That opportunity remained right up to the USSR president's 4 October 1990 decree. After wholesale prices started moving in accordance with that decree, the likelihood of attaining even minimal successes in financial recovery by means of this factor was substantially reduced.

Reform of Retail Prices: Analysis and Assessment of Options

The following scenarios for the development of events on the plane of a retail prices reform have been offered for the experts' attention:

1. The retention of the present state of affairs.

2. The expansion by a factor of three to four (up to 20-25 percent of trade turnover) of the practice of using free prices and the conservation of present prices for the majority of consumer goods.

3. The raising of retail prices in accordance with the plan proposed in May 1990 with the advance payment of partial compensation and the liberalization of part (up to 20-30 percent) of prices, that is the option which in practice is being prepared for implementation.

4. The same thing but with full compensation for the population for the centralized increase in prices; the option from the government's September program.

5. The liberalization of the larger part (over 80 percent of retail prices) with the organization of the quota-based distribution of a limited range of consumer goods at present prices.

At the stage of preliminary analysis the first and fourth options were rejected as totally pointless economically and incapable of resolving any problems. The second was assessed as the worst of the remaining three, being of an interim nature and in fact being implemented today by the local authorities. As a result two options—the third and the fifth—were chosen for further examination.

a) Centralized Increase

This reform of retail prices should have been the logical completion of the entire operation to raise wholesale and purchase prices. Three years ago it was prepared for implementation and only the government's insufficient persistence preventing this from being done. From the vantage point of today's situation it is obvious that at that time with the aid of such measures we would have succeeded in attaining quite visible results and indeed the actual implementation of the reform would have been simpler for sociopolitical reasons.

The experts suggested that the supreme achievement for the government will be bringing the 1991 budget to the qualitative state of 1990. Most likely the gain from increasing retail prices will only be able to compensate

for budget losses from increasing wholesale and purchase prices, but will not be enough to cover new expenses.

The experts noted the fact that if the reform of retail prices is carried out in the form in which it is planned then there should be a short-term improvement in the situation on the consumer market. The degree of improvement depends on how firmly we succeed in sustaining the line toward partial compensation. At best (a gain of something like R90-100 billion) the 1987 situation may be reproduced. But as a whole the increase in retail prices will not make it possible to stabilize prices and there will be a parallel increase in prices and aggravation of the shortage of goods.

There is no doubt that in implementing this option a certain increase in social tension is inevitable but it seems that society is so prepared for any rows that social anger will break out only in individual regions and among certain social strata.

A considerable proportion of this tension will be successfully removed by advance compensation and glasnost in determining its size. From the fiscal viewpoint the lower the level of compensation the better, but in no case should it exceed two-thirds of the total sum of the prices increase, otherwise the entire operation is pointless.

The experts gave an unequivocally negative assessment of the debate which developed and the practical steps of some republics in preparing and launching an indexation mechanism. Always and everywhere the extensive use of such instruments has led to the hiking of the inflation spiral but nowhere has it led to the maintenance of the population's living standard. The use of indexation is permissible only with the free movement of all retail prices. But in this case the majority of prices will be fixed and the launching of indexation mechanisms can in no way be justified.

b) Liberalization

A situation in which all or the overwhelming majority of retail prices are free and are determined depending on the correlation between demand and supply is an objective necessity on the path of economic reform. Sooner or later all countries implementing the transition to a market economy have to make a choice in favor of market mechanisms of price formation. But the sooner this happens the smaller the social price society has to pay for transition to the market. That is why the experts have deemed possible the transition to the liberalization of prices for a wide range of goods and services right now. This option is more effective economically, although more strained on the social plane.

First, it is a radical advance toward market mechanisms, and that circumstance will make it possible to eliminate a substantial proportion of criticism from the democrats and to obtain the West's support.

Second, for a wide range of goods it leads to a relatively rapid improvement in the balance of the consumer market, although at high prices which will have a tendency to grow in the future. Nonetheless, the appearance of goods in the stores may for our population's awareness be a more substantial factor, attesting to a breakthrough in the economy's development.

In addition this reform of prices makes it possible to eliminate almost completely subsidies from the budget for prices for consumer goods and also to remove from the state direct responsibility for changing prices and on this plane liberalization is more neutral than an administrative increase in prices. Here the population's social protection is effected through a policy of increasing incomes: An increase in permissible wages growth rates, the indexing of pensions, allowances, and grants. The level of compensating increases in wages is determined at talks with the trade unions and they are paid with the income of enterprises in the production sphere and with the budget for budget-carried organizations. The task is to ensure that the wages increase lags behind the prices increase.

Pensions, allowances, and grants are indexed on a one to one basis, except for high pensions which, for instance, are more than three times the minimum wage.

But we should also consider the negative aspects of this approach, which could give rise to an eruption of social emotions and thus cancel out its merits.

Serious complications in implementing this option will be: the lack of control from the center over the flows of commodities and supplies, the virtual impossibility of creating a single card system on the scale of the country, the technical and organizational unpreparedness of trade, and the high degree of its monopolization. But all these problems are soluble, although they require a very serious attitude.

Choice

The experts' overall opinion came down to the fact that the option of the centralized increase in retail prices with a consideration for the sociopolitical situation is objectively more grounded than liberalization. Under present conditions any government, if it wants to remain in power, can embark only on this option. There is no doubt that from the viewpoint of long-term socioeconomic consequences the option of liberalizing prices is preferable: It would make it possible to launch market mechanisms, partly resolve financial problems, and stabilize and maintain this state on the consumer market. But at the same time it must be considered that by virtue of the present economic imbalance the first eruption of free prices could be very substantial and generate an extremely adverse reaction.

The option of the centralized increase of prices will not make it possible to resolve any problems in the medium and long term but by virtue of sociopolitical restrictions today it is the only one possible.

Under these conditions the government's political skill and economic professionalism could be manifested in how rapidly and resolutely the transition to free market prices is effected in the future...

Only gradual movement along the path of liberalizing prices will make it possible to maintain a certain social stability in society and make it possible to try to implement a series of steps for a slow reform of the bureaucratic type. At the same time, any reform of prices which is not backed up by comprehensive changes, primarily in financial policy, will be unable to fundamentally alter the socioeconomic development trends of our society.

Foreign Aid Commission Session Reported

91UF0472A Moscow TRUD in Russian 13 Feb 91 p 1

[Article by V. Naumov: "Who Will Get Western Aid"]

[Text] **Freight, mostly foodstuffs, has been arriving in our country for three months now. Private individuals and entire corporations, both rich and not quite so rich, have become involved in this charitable movement. They have set the goal of helping us and our perestroyka. We are sincerely grateful to them; however, there is no concealing that we also feel somewhat bitter...**

It was reported at a meeting, held several days ago, of the commission for organizing the use of foreign humanitarian aid that about 89,000 tons of freight have already arrived in our country; foodstuffs account for 70 percent, drugs and medical equipment for 1.5 percent, and clothing and footwear, 1 percent. This stream is picking up, despite rumors that the West has allegedly reduced aid to us in conjunction with events in the Baltic area. Freight is being guarded by the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] and the KGB; measures to prevent theft are being taken.

It is expected that a total of about 600,000 tons will arrive (flour especially earmarked for Central Asia whose population has been suffering from a flat-cake shortage accounts for 200,000 tons). We should say that this is not a whole lot for a huge country—for example, just over a kilogram of foodstuffs per capita. This makes it all the more important for people who steer and regulate the streams of humanitarian aid to ensure fairness in the distribution of aid, seeking to provide it first to the most unfortunate ones.

This is where bewildered questions arise (they were also voiced at the meeting of the commission). On the one hand, we could rejoice in the fact that the Baltic republics rank close to the top in the amount of aid received (per capita)... However, the situation with, for example, Tajikistan is different. In terms of infant mortality and many other woes, it is ahead of all other republics, but by 11 February it had not received a single kilogram of such aid. Likewise, Azerbaijan got nothing.

Interestingly, one-half of the foodstuffs delivered, 43,000 tons, were given to the Moscow Trade Administration to be sold. Once again, there is nothing bad about it. After all, the partners of Moscow have been failing to deliver on contracts, and these losses must somehow be made up. Once again, there is a "but": Chelyabinsk, which is suffering badly due to a shortage of goods, and other industrial centers awaiting at least some aid, did not get a single kilogram of long-awaited foodstuffs. Refugees from South Ossetia and the ruined residents of Nagorno-Karabakh did not get a crumb from foreign aid. They said about them at the meeting: "They should..."

The commission does have a strategy; it has displayed both its knowledge of the situation and understanding of problems. However, the erstwhile weaknesses of our universal distribution practices are a factor: He who screams loudest has a fuller plate.

Volga Auto Works Open to Foreign Shareholders

91UF0472B Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 13 Feb 91 Union Edition p 3

[Unattributed report: "VAZ Gets Foreign Shareholders"]

[Text] AvtoVAZ [Production Association of the Volga Passenger Car Works] will become a joint-stock company with the participation of foreign shareholders. This decision was made at a conference of the labor collective of the association. Our country will retain a controlling interest: Some shares will be bought by the enterprise collective and some will belong to the state.

According to calculations done by specialists, tapping foreign capital will help to maintain an up-to-date level of production, high quality, and competitiveness of AvtoVAZ subcompact cars, reports a TASS correspondent.

January Rail Performance Figures Detailed

914H0100A Moscow GUDOK in Russian 6 Feb 91 p 1

[Unattributed article under the rubric "In the Mirror of Statistics": "January Results"]

[Text] Unfortunately, the first month of the new year was not a turning point in the work of the railway men. It ended with a small but nonetheless clear shortfall compared to the plan for total dispatch of cargo. The level of operations declined in comparison with January 1990, particularly the total transfer of wagons by 9.5 percent, the total dispatch of cargo by 6 percent, and the total dispatch of cargo for the state order by 7.6 percent.

That could not help but affect the fulfillment of the sector's economic indicators. Labor productivity is 6.4 percent lower compared to last year's. The cost of transportation increased by 2.2 percent. Revenues are covering the operational expenses of the railroads with difficulty.

In January, railway transportation conveyed 303.6 million tons of goods for the national economy, which is 1.3

million tons less than planned. The target for the state order was underfulfilled by 2.2 million tons (1.2 percent). Out of 10 categories the plan was fulfilled for four—coke, iron and manganese ore, ferrous metals, and grain.

Delivery of cargo for local planning was more successful. The plan was overfulfilled for 14 types of cargo out of 30. About 4 million tons of construction materials and 200,000 tons of food goods were transported over and above the plan. It should be noted that the shortfalls against the plan that occurred in January for a whole series of the most important cargoes can be blamed to a great degree on those who dispatched the cargo.

Transportation took place irregularly over the course of the month. For example in the first 10-day period, despite sufficiently favorable weather conditions over most of the territory of the country, the level of the average daily loading was the lowest for the month. It reached its highest level in the second 10-day period.

The plan for loading was met by 18 railroads, including 14 of those in the European region. Of the main lines in the eastern portion, the Krasnoyarsk, West Siberian, Transbaykal, and Baykal-Amur railroads overfulfilled the plan. At the same time, on a number of the railroads the transportation that was carried out over and above the plan was of significant volumes. On the Southeastern Railroad it was equal to four days of operation of the railroad, on the Belorussian and Southwestern Railroad, two days, and on the Krasnoyarsk Railroad, more than 1.5 days, which testifies to the fact that the plans are insufficiently demanding.

The greatest shortfall occurred on the Tselina (930,000 tons), Northern (870,000 tons), and East Siberian (860,000 tons) railroads.

Accounting targets for freight turnover was underfulfilled. The plan for passenger turnover was exceeded by 1.1 percent, but it was reduced by 2.8 percent compared to the corresponding period last year.

The use of rolling stock has improved somewhat. Car turnover was speeded up by almost one hour in comparison to the norm and by 1.4 hours in comparison to January 1990. The average weight of a cargo train decreased by 9 tons. However, the target was underfulfilled by 112 tons (3.6 percent). Throughout the network and on the majority of the railroads, fulfillment of the schedule for passenger trains improved.

Agricultural

Stroyev Speaks at Agricultural Roundtable

914B0091A Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 15 Feb 91 pp 1-2

[Roundtable on agricultural economics at the Moscow Higher Party School on 8 February 1991: "Multisectoral Economy—Today's Reality"]

[Text] On 8 February, a "roundtable" panel met at the Moscow Higher Party School in which managers of kolkhozes [collective farms], sovkhozes [state farms], lease collectives, and agroindustrial entities participated, as well as farmers, agrarian economists, and party functionaries. Those in attendance discussed the issues of a plurality of forms of ownership and economic operations in the agrarian economy of our country.

Let Us Check the Course

Ye.S. Stroyev, Politburo member and CPSU Central Committee secretary, opened the "roundtable" with brief introductory remarks. He said that those present have gathered to discuss multisectoral arrangements in the farm economy, in the agrarian sector of our country. Will such economics take root in our country? If not, what is the reason? At present, these issues have become particularly acute and politically charged. It might be said that they have grown into the most acute issues of modern politics.

Let us check our party course today in this circle of pioneers of new directions, employees of the higher party school, scientists from other higher education and scientific-research establishments, and production employees. Let us verify which approaches appear to be the most promising, and which ones appear to be unrealistic.

At present, hardly anyone is against multisectoral arrangements. However, as soon as we come to the issue of what needs to be done in order to translate such multisectoral arrangements into reality, a multitude of clear-cut controversial judgments emerges. For some reason, everyone begins to adapt the thesis of multisectoral arrangements to his own view of the world and his own approach.

Some say: We should preserve kolkhozes and sovkhozes in their form to date at any price. Others advocate dissolving the kolkhozes and sovkhozes, and distributing, giving all of their assets to farmers. Yet others say: Divide them up conditionally while preserving the kolkhozes and sovkhozes. Yet others say: Large amounts of capital investment will be our salvation; in the absence of this, we will never overcome difficulties and will never put the agrarian complex on its feet. Finally, there is the following point of view: Creating agroindustrial associations is the way out; if we complete the processing of products grown within these associations, affluence will come, and we will live well.

Others simply maintain that scientific-technical progress is the issue, that science has fallen behind to the degree that at present it is incapable of offering a way out of the existing situation.

I could cite a great many other views that one happens to encounter.

To my mind, there are certain justifications for all of the points of view enumerated; however, not one of them has borne fruit in the form of final results. It appears that

they could not have borne fruit because it is unproductive to consider individual points of view in isolation from the entire complex of issues.

An unbalanced approach to the development of the agrarian economy poses the threat of bringing about confusion in the consciousness and behavior of our cadres. Specific employees are now put in a very difficult situation. Everyone talks, everyone gives advice, but the advice is too contradictory.

We should have a clear idea of what the position of the party is with regard to a multisectoral agrarian economy: to give leeway to all forms of economic operations, give leeway to multisectoral arrangements, and create a unified mechanism for supporting all forms of ownership and economic operations, subsequently monitoring to see which of the forms will hold its own more successfully.

Another topic that is of interest to us today constitutes the core of the entire agrarian reform: It is land reform. We will not be able to implement it without fundamental documents. We consider the basic legislation of our country on land and the decree of the USSR president "On Priority Tasks in the Implementation of Land Reform" to be fundamental.

It appears to me that we should hold two positions: First, give land to all who desire to farm it and turn out products; second, categorically bar dissolving kolkhozes and sovkhozes without the consent of labor collectives.

The debate over land has now brought out the extremes: On the one hand, not to give them the land; on the other hand, to return the land to its former owners.

On the issue of fees for land. Let us ask ourselves: Why should our peasants purchase land? Do they have funds to purchase land? To my mind, the main point for the peasants themselves is to be given the right to own land and freely dispose of the fruits of their labor.

The opponents of farm operations say: Who wants to work at present? Farmer representatives are in attendance here. I would very much like them to answer this question. Are there people who would like to work? I believe that there are. They are few, but in the beginning not too many of them are needed. Should we give up the kolkhozes and sovkhozes at the same time? I believe that this is not necessary either. Kolkhoz chairmen are present here who will also share with us their experience working under new conditions.

There are more questions that concern many people at present. How will the agroindustrial complex fare in the environment of a transition to the market? Will we be able to agree to a variety of forms of ownership and economic operations and a multisectoral economy?

Equal Conditions for Different Forms of Economic Operations

Yu.P. Garin, farmer from Pyshchugskiy Rayon, Kostroma Oblast, and member of the CPSU Central Committee, was the first to speak at the "roundtable." He said:

At present, I am farmer. Prior to this, I worked for 20 years as a kolkhoz chairman in the northeastern section of Kostroma Oblast. I live 370 kilometers away from Kostroma. Therefore, my knowledge of the life of both kolkhozes and farmers is not based on reading books.

Briefly about my farm. I have only 200 hectares of land, out of which 100 hectares are arable land, and hay fields and pastures account for the rest. As of now, I have 108 head of cattle, and by the end of the year there will be 170. My plan is to keep an average annual herd of 220 head. For now, I operate the farm alone.

Who will win this contest: the kolkhoz that I ran for 20 years or me, the farmer? I have no doubt that I will prevail if I stay healthy. Why? At present, there are many people on the kolkhoz who put in incomplete working days. They are fed by those who work intensively for a full day. Since this is the case, the statistical kolkhoz worker will not catch up with me in terms of output anytime soon.

Of course, I can count on being victorious only provided that equal terms are offered to the kolkhoz and to me. However, so far this is not the case. So, I decided to purchase refinery products, but, I was told at a tank storage facility: You will pay market prices plus a five-percent surcharge. This can easily wipe me out.

There is also the following problem. I fatten beef cattle. I have Aberdeen-Angus calves on my farm. They are very good for fattening. However, there is a shortage of such cattle for farmers. I believe that we are making a very bad mistake by having very little beef cattle.

First, dairy cattle will not give us good meat. Second, we need two, or perhaps, two and a half times more cattle to produce meat using dairy cattle.

There is a lot of confused writing about land reform in the newspapers. The right to purchase and sell land cannot be granted. If we allow it unbridled speculation in land will begin.

Land should be provided only for producing agricultural output. If I am unable to work for some reason, there ought to be an arrangement whereby the soviet will dispose of this land.

[Question from the floor] Is your peasant farm within the kolkhoz, or is it fully independent?

[Garin] My farm is independent. However, I would not be able to get by if I resolutely severed all ties to the kolkhoz. For example, I have to buy fodder from them.

[Question from the floor] Who do you sell your products to, how, and at what prices?

[Garin] So far, I have not engaged in selling products. To make it clear to all how I am going to sell them I will say that I have requested a foodstuffs tax and a state order for my farm. Prices will most likely be the same as for the kolkhoz.

M.V. Spiridonov, chairman of the imeni 22d Party Congress Kolkhoz in Orlovskiy Rayon, Orel Oblast, Hero of Socialist Labor, and member of the USSR Supreme Soviet, spoke next. He said: The issue of how to best facilitate the assertion of multisectoral arrangements in the agricultural economic sector has been of concern to me for a long time. I have thought a lot about it. It began when I came to the conclusion that relations of production on the kolkhoz need to be changed in the most fundamental matter. I sought the advice of kolkhoz members. We began to change these relations long before others began to do it. This is why we have now taken the lead, outrunning those who kept thinking whether to restructure their farms or wait.

What makes our kolkhoz different? I would put it as follows: A combination of collective and individual labor. Traditional kolkhoz structures function on our farm, while at the same time individual peasant farms operate within the framework of the same kolkhoz. In other words, our farmers operate within a joint farm.

The kolkhoz is based on small collectives that have complete freedom to operate. They lease the main means of production: land, machinery, and so on. Their mutual relations are based on contracts.

I will cite some statistics in order to make it clear to those in the audience what the accomplishments of our kolkhoz are. We harvest 50 quintals of grain per hectare; the milk yield of our cows is more than five tons per year; every kolkhoz member turns out products worth more than 21,000 rubles [R]. I will recall that we ensure all of this in the environment of Orel Oblast.

They are good statistics, are they not? However, I will tell you honestly that they do not make us dizzy. We understand full well that we need to take the next step after leasing. The search goes on for ways to bring the worker closer to property and to make him an inquisitive and creative performer. Creating farms within the framework of the kolkhoz is one of the avenues of this quest.

I would like to say right away that this will call for considerable funds. According to our calculations, the creation of one such farm costs approximately R350,000. This is natural. If we want young people in their prime to become farmers, we should give them an opportunity to mechanize work. We cannot count on their willingness to work with forks and shovels alone.

As a form of economic operations, the kolkhoz by far has not exhausted its potential. However, we cannot work the old way on the kolkhoz either. We have become convinced of that, and now we are trying to convince others.

From my point of view, the social sphere is the main area in which the greatest transformations are needed. Changes that everyone awaits so anxiously occur immediately when the social sphere is rejuvenated.

[Question from the floor] On your kolkhoz, farmers operate within its framework. What is your attitude toward completely independent farms?

[M. Spiridonov] It is favorable. I am in favor of a variety of forms of property and economic operations. However, I believe that all of them should operate on an equal footing. So far, we have observed distortions. Look at the following example. The Second AKKOR [Association of Peasant Farms and Agricultural Cooperatives of Russia] Congress ended recently. The congress decided to create its own bank. The peasant farms will receive loans virtually interest-free. Meanwhile, the kolkhozes are forced to pay increased interest rates on loans under current conditions. Banks have become commercial, and they now fleece us thoroughly. So, it turns out that the terms are already unequal.

[Stroyev] As you see it, are there irreconcilable differences between kolkhozes and peasant farms?

[M. Spiridonov] Those who would like these contradictions to definitely exist are the ones talking about them. Excellent forms of cooperation have been successfully found not only on our kolkhoz but also on many farms that I am aware of. Many people attempt to do everything together, in unison. In Orel Oblast, they have embarked on this path. To my mind, this path is correct.

I.A. Bulychev, a farmer from Gryazinskiy Rayon, Lipetsk Oblast, said in his presentation: My brothers have been operating our peasant farm together with me. Previously, we had a group operating without work orders, and then we tried to operate under intrafarm leasing. However, the fields we got to work changed every year, and we had plenty of bosses above us. So, we decided to work on our own.

Land was allocated to us, and we were given help in arranging R120,000 in short- and long-term loans for acquiring fixed and working assets. We purchased machinery and signed direct contracts with a sugar plant and a grain enterprise for the delivery of sugar beets and grain. We managed to repay a substantial segment of short- and long-term loans with proceeds from selling products.

We do not strive to increase our own pay; we invest funds in the means of production in order to secure higher returns on our land, purchase better machinery, and switch to new technologies.

I am convinced that kolkhozes and sovkhozes are necessary. If someone wants to operate individually he should be helped. However, nobody will do it better than the kolkhozes and sovkhozes.

When they say that at present there are few farmers in rural areas, I want to ask them: Have necessary conditions been created for this? After all, farmers need extensive and profound knowledge. Meanwhile, training in our rural areas has somehow been wound down inconspicuously. This is what the obstacle to bringing up future farmers is. If we want to have them we should teach them economics, politics, and technology. A full-fledged farm cannot be created without knowledge. All of us were taught poorly; this is our common mistake.

As far as land reform is concerned, I may say the following: My brothers and I are against the private ownership of land. We have nothing with which to buy it. This means that it will be purchased by those who do not work the land.

The issue of whether a multisectoral economy will take root in our rural areas is quite complex, said AKKOR Vice President Yu.I. Larin. All of us can see clearly how difficult it has been for farm operations to become established in the rural areas.

This is how I would word this question: Will a multisectoral economy catch on, will it be allowed to catch on?

The allocation of land has proceeded slowly. For example, a land committee did exist in Lipetsk Oblast, but subsequently it somehow disappeared quietly.

Recently, the Second AKKOR Congress was held. The response of the audience to a speech by Shtepo was interesting. He is a good manager, a good master, but his propaganda in favor of cooperation between the peasants and the kolkhozes and sovkhozes was not successful. As far as I am concerned, we must cooperate, we will have to cooperate because the entire infrastructure is in the possession of the kolkhozes and sovkhozes, and there is nothing that can be done about this. However, this is what happens in the aforementioned Lipetsk Oblast. On many farms, managers warn: Do you not even drop by the workshop to machine a nut; on top of this, do you not even stop by the office to make arrangements. As I see it, this is the source of hostility. This is why I believe that reconciliation is possible, but only if one of the sides changes its position, that is, the side that is the monopoly owner of all infrastructure.

I am not referring to the sovkhoz directors and kolkhoz chairmen present here. They most likely understand the thoughts, feelings, and desires of the people who wish to operate independently.

As far as the issue of the agroindustrial complex during a transition to the market is concerned, I believe that this is a complicated issue. Let us recall that the NEP [New Economic Plan] began in agriculture; China has fed itself by beginning with reforms in agriculture; why should our agrarian complex trail behind other sectors? We will not avoid this anyway. A universal economic postulate states that, after all, it is the agrarian sector that responds most promptly and efficiently to new terms offered by an economic mechanism. It is another matter that too many issues have accumulated and intertwined to form a knot so tight that we do not know which thread to pull in order to untie it.

[Question from the floor] What do you think about private ownership of land?

[A. Linin] I believe that we should not fear private property. People cannot be free in the absence of private property. It is another matter what its share should be in the structure of the agroindustrial complex—apparently, it should be small. However, I think that it should exist; as far as I am concerned, it is beyond any doubt.

VASKhNIL [All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences imeni V.I. Lenin] President **A.A. Nikonov** noted: The issues of land reform have not yet been adequately reflected in our exchange of opinions at this "round-table." It will be difficult for new forms of economic operations to become established without the implementation of this reform.

Why is land reform so necessary? We have brought our land to the point of a heart attack. Soil degradation has occurred on tremendous areas. There are two reasons for this: First, the inefficient use of land does not make it possible to secure what nature is able to provide. Second, the master of the land is no longer there.

How is the reform to be implemented? It is important to study our domestic and world experience.

First, land reforms are unsuccessful wherever they are implemented from the top, without the participation of the peasantry and not in its interest—everywhere! Therefore, we should take this path: Definitely allocate land to all who would like to and are capable of farming it in any form: fruit or vegetable gardens for urban dwellers, and peasant farms or small cooperatives for farmers.

Second, if someone is not ready to operate independently for some reason, he should not be bothered. Nothing can be done by force.

Now about the question of whether farm managers and farmers can reconcile. I know two sovkhoz directors in Pytalovskiy Rayon, Pskov Oblast. One of them is a thoughtful and democratic man who believes in the potential of peasant farms, and boldly proceeds to set them up. He has about 30 such farms on the land of the sovkhoz. The functions of management are different now. It is involved in supplies procurement, sales, the social sphere, and so on. What is the result? Production grows and develops.

Another farm is next to them. It has a manager of an entirely different type. People come to him with proposals to start peasant farms, and he dispatches them saying: "We do not need you; you are getting in our

way." He set the price for milk at one-half of what the state pays for it. What is his performance? Most lamentable.

As we can see, very much depends in this matter on the personal traits, competence, and humanism of those who head farms.

I am certain that there should be no confrontation between kolkhozes and sovkhozes on the one hand, and peasant farms on the other hand. The kolkhozes and sovkhozes will evolve into entities of a new type with a maximum of freedom for the people.

Peasants should be guaranteed their success. You know, private ownership of land is not a complete guarantee either. Being certain that they will never be driven off the land is the main guarantee.

Land reform is successful only when it is built into an entire agrarian reform with legal, material-technical, scientific, and other support.

At present, agrarian scientists of our country face extremely important tasks. They include system models of all levels, from peasant families, cooperatives, sovkhozes, kolkhozes, to regions of our country, and to our niche in the world market and the world foodstuffs management.

We should offer models for developing peasant farms in order to make sure that no individual who resolves to become a master will feel wronged. Meanwhile, the mass media have often shown farmers with forks and shovels. This suggests the conclusion that peasants setting up their own farms doom themselves to slavery.

V.S. Vavilov, farmer from Moscow Oblast, said in his speech: Previously, I worked as deputy director of the Voskresenskiy Sovkhoz. I have now become a farmer. I have 14 hectares of land and 10 head of cattle, and offspring next to them.

For the first year, the sovkhoz gave moral support to our farm. We managed to get by without financial aid; we built a small farm, and I got myself heifers. Now they are calving for the third time; I am planning to obtain more than 6,000 kilograms of milk per cow this year. At present, the milk yield of cows of the same breed in the sovkhoz is four metric tons. I believe that their milk yields will not get to the 6,000 mark until 2000 either. Meanwhile, cows eat the same amount of feed on my farm and on the sovkhoz. I generate more products per hectare. There are half a million cows in the Moscow area. If they improve by, say, 500 kilograms, a lot of land will be freed up!

The following is interesting. The sovkhoz enlists the help of up to 5,000 urban residents daily between August and November. They work two or three hours a day. Our employees observe from the sidelines how they work.

I propose to do the following: The 4,500 hectares that the sovkhoz has should be divided up among, for example, 600 people. I will guarantee that these 600 people will cope with this land parcel without enlisting the help of urban residents or resorting to a minimum of it.

Chairman of the Venevskoye Agroindustrial Association in Tula Oblast **N.A. Babkov** agreed: New forms of economic operations are catching on. There is the Krasnyy Oktyabr Kolkhoz in our association on which they are organizing a joint- stock company. They developed their by-laws and they said: We will not distribute 10 percent of the land among the shareholders; if some of the shareholders suddenly decide to become farmers they will have the go-ahead.

In the nearby Aksininskiy Sovkhoz, they want to create a union of peasant farms. In Petrovskiy Sovkhoz, they are creating a union of farms.

Kolkhozes and sovkhozes remain. However, they are transformed, and their image changes. Collective labor is preserved in joint-stock companies that we are creating. However, ownership is shifted closer to the workers. They may withdraw from this any time they want and set up their peasant farms. It is their right. The advent of the market makes the following question more acute: Will various economic forms operate on an equal footing?

Let me give you an example. Effective 1991, a single-family house costs R150,000. A seed-processing installation that used to cost R780,000 costs R1.8 million. How can farmers, peasant farms, or associations operate given such growth of prices?

As of now, we have 44 people who wish to become farmers. Here is a list. We are going to work with them. Perhaps, some of them will not pass the test. However, how can I, in my capacity as APO [Agroindustrial Association] chairman, respond to their question: "Where is the money for our set-up costs?" We have been given R500,000 for the entire APO by the oblast. How am I supposed to distribute this among 44 people?

VASKhNIL Academician **B.I. Poshkus**, deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers State Commission for Foodstuffs and Procurement, noted that not one of the farmers speaking there got his land from Soviet power. All of them were given land by the farm on which they worked previously. What does this indicate?

As I understand it, all of you have personal auxiliary plots without restrictions, as far as their economic form is concerned. This is what we recommend. It is precisely from kolkhozes or sovkhozes that independent peasants should emerge who are capable of working outside the framework of the socialized economy and even without ties to it.

I happened to talk to a farmer recently. He had 14 hectares of arable land, 16 cows, and 30 hogs. His total sales came to R50,000 a year. He was an independent peasant, a machinery operator. However, he did not want to divorce himself from a farm. I asked him why. He said that he would have gone bankrupt within a week

had he done so. Seed growing, mechanization, scientific consultations, veterinary care—the socialized farm provided everything. How was he supposed to use land intensively?

I believe that this path, through personal auxiliary plots, is precisely ours if we want to use land and other means of production intensively by bringing the people closer to ownership. This path will give us independent peasants.

The peasants should engage in contractual relations with the specific farms they are associated with in order to facilitate the sale of products and stimulate production services.

V.V. Miloserdov, Gosplan [State Planning Committee] economic adviser and corresponding member of VASKhNIL, said in his speech:

Having agreed to multisectoral arrangements in the economy, we set the task of freeing peasants, having them manage their products and determine the structure of planted areas on their own. If the peasants are free they do not have to be urged on.

The existing form of managing kolkhozes and sovkhozes prevents the peasants from being freed. May they gain freedom while remaining there? The case of a kolkhoz headed by Chartayev, who is known to the entire country, indicates that that they may. Quite a high level of labor motivation may be ensured without destroying the existing structures.

However, freedom is necessary not only at the primary levels of management but also in mutual relations between the peasants and the state. What kind of freedom is it when we introduce market relations on the one hand, while setting fixed prices for products on the other hand? The peasants should be given breathing space.

In his speech, **Yu.M. Shchuplyakov,** chief of the Union Council of Kolhozes Legal Department, discussed an alarming trend. The trend he referred to was the desire to set peasants against one another, and against city dwellers. Ordinary peasants are being pitted against specialists and managers, and kolkhoz members—against farmers. At the same time, they say that the peasants are incapable of feeding the urban areas. In essence, they propose to eliminate kolkhozes. Nobody asks whether kolkhoz members themselves want it.

The desire to split and downsize everything is a dangerous desire. We should not forget that large farms and complexes exist in our country in which the state has invested billions of rubles. As far as I know, we have more than 3,000 such complexes. Apparently, large agricultural production facilities should exist, along with farmsteads and medium-size kolkhozes and sovkhozes.

I believe that suggestions to push the farmers out to hamlets are dangerous. Given a lack of roads and communications, they will be entirely cut off from the social facilities that have been created in rural areas. These facilities may not be very good; however, in 60 years we have created at least some social facilities in the rural areas. If we push the farmers out to hamlets, we will cut them off from these facilities because they have no transportation.

Communists and the Agrarian Reform

Politburo member, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee **Ye.S. Stroyev** made concluding remarks before the audience.

Multisectoral economic arrangements in the agrarian sector are a stubborn fact, regardless of the side we view them from—the left or the right. At the same time, we cannot deny that this process has proceeded slowly so far. There are several reasons for this.

The creation of a legal foundation has been delayed, especially in a number of republics. The people are not sure that this political course is a long-range one, hence their apprehensions. Finally, there is no reliable mechanism for the emergence of multisectoral arrangements in the economy. Services to independent farms remain extremely poor. A system of machinery that such services require does not exist. Issues of credit provision, allocation of material resources, and a pricing mechanism have not been resolved. In a word, little work has yet been done on the economic and legal aspects of this endeavor.

Our discussion has shown that kolkhozes and sovkhozes are in need of urgent reconstruction, and that primary labor collectives need to be given latitude and independence. I have always said that family farms are the liveliest primary cells of a social organism. Let them work under family leases, let them work on collective contracts, let them find any other form, with their own bank accounts or the FRTs [expansion unidentified]. If we delay the reconstruction of kolkhozes and sovkhozes we will make no progress.

Chairman Spiridonov from Orel Oblast who spoke here has already secured yields of 50 quintals per hectare, and he intends to dash forward yet again. Where does he find reserves for a new dash? In the internal restructuring of the farm and in creating family farms.

As far as land reform is concerned, it is apparent that we will not accomplish much unless we create a reliable mechanism for implementing it. Land committees, which were mentioned in passing here, are being created by some people and liquidated right away. This is not the way to do it. The committees should be set up and should begin operations. There should be no doubt and no hesitation in this regard, because only in the committees will we be able to figure out what land is to be handed over, what forms are to be adopted, and how to proceed most rationally based on local natural and climatic conditions. We cannot allow the party to remain on the sidelines in this sphere.

Communists, the best of the peasants, should also become members of the land committees. Our policy should be implemented precisely with their help. Land cannot be allocated to the detriment of the people who live in this territory. The party has a duty to rise to the social defense of the peasants.

This also suggests the following conclusion: A transition to multisectoral economic arrangements will not occur by itself. The rural areas are in need of major investments, major social renewal measures, and better technical equipment. It would be ignorant on our part to say that we will develop the agrarian complex based only on introducing various forms of economic operations. Indeed, we will provide better incentives for the people; indeed, we will bring up masters; indeed, land will be treated better. However, we should think not only about the masters, but also about creating normal conditions for these masters. For example, Garin first of all built a house and a farm when he was about to switch to new conditions after 20 years of chairmanship. When creating a most up-to-date farm, Spiridonov first built a house, a fully mechanized barnyard, and a fodder storage facility. Only later did he invite farmers, and in the first year they produced 6,200 kilograms of milk per cow. As far as attempts to develop agriculture with forks are concerned, they are doomed to failure.

Delaying the reinforcement of the material base of rural areas poses a threat. We have a duty to consider this issue in the highest echelons, including a CPSU Central Committee plenum and a session of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Finally, there should be only one yardstick for all forms of economic multisectoral arrangements and all economic practices—efficiency, moving forward. If there is no such movement it means that we are doing something wrong; this means that we have miscalculated somehow. Only the party that offers a more effective economy based on free and joyful labor will win. The people will believe this party only.

Deputy Chairman on 1991 Crop Preparation

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[Interview with Vyacheslav Ivanovich Chernoivanov, first deputy chairman of the State Commission of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers for Food and Procurements, by V. Stepanov; place and date not given: "You Cannot Tell Spring to Wait"]

[Text] **Half of February has already passed. The time is not far off when spring will call the farmers to the fields. Are they prepared for planting? What do they have left to do? The editors asked these questions of the first deputy chairman of the State Commission of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers for Food and Procurements, V.I. Chernoivanov.**

Do Not Be Late, Farmers

[Chernoivanov] There are many difficulties this year, he said. Some of them are related to last fall's unfavorable weather conditions. They not only led to large crop losses, especially of potatoes, vegetables, and feeds, but they also got the farmers out of their customary rhythm. As a result, more than 4 million hectares were not planted in winter crops, 20 million fewer hectares of fallow were plowed, and the straw was not gathered from 14 million hectares. To this one must add the fact that winter crops might die on 3-4 million hectares. The volume of field work in the country as a whole will increase by approximately 25 percent. In the spring it will be necessary to plow 45 million hectares. But still there is no reason for a great deal of alarm. Reports from the local areas, the analyses of specialists, and our calculations show that many kolkhozes [collective farms] and sovkhozes [state farms] have a chance to cultivate the soil properly and to plant and top dress the winter crops.

[Stepanov] Vyacheslav Ivanovich, will there be enough seeds? Have they been cleaned?

[Chernoivanov] There are plenty of seeds of corn, sugar beets, flax, vegetables, cotton, alfalfa, sainfoin, and sweet clover. As for the spring grain crops, the situation is the same. The kolkhozes and sovkhozes have 17.1 million tons—95 percent of what they need. Officials have allotted 1.8 million tons from state resources. Moreover, there are to be 670,000 tons in interrepublic shipments. They have already dispatched 220,000 tons. Unfortunately, there are fewer seeds of the first and second class than there were by this date last year. The kolkhozes and sovkhozes and administrative organs of the agroindustrial complex must devote the most serious attention to this work.

I would like to discuss potatoes especially. We are short 1.8 million tons of seeds, including about 1.2 million tons in Russia. Blaming the shortage of seeds, many farms intend to reduce the areas planted in this crop. But in the majority of oblasts the shortage of seeds is merely an excuse. A considerable share of them could be purchased from the population. Moreover, the State Commission for Food and Procurements will assist in augmenting the seed supply. The main reason for the planned reduction of the areas planted in potatoes and vegetables, in our view, lies elsewhere. For there is fairly little hope of receiving help from the cities.

Let us be realistic: In the rural areas there are not enough people or technical equipment and industry is not providing agriculture with the necessary machines. Therefore, every city, as well as collectives of plants, factories, construction projects, organizations, and institutions today are faced with a choice: to participate actively in the field work and provide themselves with potatoes, vegetables, and fruits or not to participate and be left without these products.

Taking this into account, the USSR Cabinet of Ministers recently adopted concrete measures for enlisting the population of the cities, worker settlements, and other population points in mass agricultural work. The corresponding normative acts will be published in the next few days.

[Stepanov] Will the farms not be late in repairing the technical equipment, and how are the machine builders helping them?

[Chernoivanov] The supply of technical equipment for agricultural workers is still low. City dwellers are being enlisted to help because the kolkhozes and sovkhozes are unsatisfactorily provided with machines and equipment. Nonetheless the supply for the rural areas is deteriorating.

Last year alone the machine builders failed to deliver to the kolkhozes and sovkhozes more than 60,000 tractors, more than 26,000 trucks, 1,800 sprinklers, 516,000 batteries, as well as other material and technical resources. The situation is not improving this year.

Now about the readiness of the technical equipment for field work.

By 1 February the following were in good repair: 86 percent of the tractors, 83 percent of the trucks, 82 percent of the cultivators, and 84 percent of the plows. These indicators have risen during the past two weeks but they are still somewhat lower than they were on the corresponding date of last year.

There are several reasons for this. One of them is the fact that in the local areas, on many kolkhozes and sovkhozes, and at repair enterprises, frankly, existing capacities are poorly utilized. Another reason is the shortage of spare parts.

[Stepanov] What is the solution to the problem?

[Chernoivanov] A number of measures are being taken at the level of the Union Government. I have in mind first and foremost the recent decree of the USSR Council of Ministers, "On Additional Measures for Organized Wintering of Cattle and Spring Field Work in 1991." This document instructs all ministries and departments producing means of production for the agroindustrial complex to provide for the delivery before 1 May of machines, equipment, and spare parts in a quantity that amounts to no less than 70 percent of the volume of their sales to rural areas envisioned for the first half year. The agroindustrial complex is being allotted additional metal. Before 1 May, agriculture should receive no less than 40 percent of the annual quota of polyethylene film.

[Stepanov] So there are possibilities of raising a good harvest this year?

[Chernoivanov] Undoubtedly. In spite of the difficulties discussed above.

Military

Moiseyev Favors 'Facelifting' Soviet Army

LD2102072691 Moscow TASS in English 0710 GMT 21 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Oleg Moskovskiy]

[Text] Moscow February 21 TASS—Chief of the Soviet General Staff Mikhail Moiseyev favoured facelifting for the Soviet Army. In an interview with TASS, he named "specification of the composition and the establishment of a basically new defensive group of troops in the USSR" the top priority task.

"We have to resolve many issues concerning the withdrawal of our troops from East European countries, their deployment, the implementation of obligations under the Paris Treaty and the solution of social problems," Moiseyev stressed.

He noted that the Soviet Armed Forces, as well as the entire country, are living through an important period in their development. "We have begun the military reform influencing several hundred thousands of servicemen, their family members, munitions industry workers and pre-conscription young people," Moiseyev said.

It is planned to carry out the military reform, which began after the USSR adopted the new Soviet defence doctrine in 1987, in several stages, he said.

Summing up the first results of this process, Moiseyev singled out the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the unilateral 500,000-men reduction of the Soviet Armed Forces, the implementation of the treaty on the reduction of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles and the withdrawal of troops from East European countries and Mongolia.

Conference Examines Military Politicz' Reforms

PM2002162991 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 16 Feb 91 First Edition p 1

["Our correspondent" report: "Improving Cadre Organs' Work"]

[Text] A conference of Soviet Army and Navy cadre organs' leading personnel was held 13-15 February in Moscow. Topical questions of work with cadres in the contemporary phase of military reform were discussed. Army General V. Yermakov, USSR deputy defense minister for cadres; Colonel General A. Ovchinnikov, first deputy chief of the Soviet Army and Navy Main Political Directorate; Colonel General V. Arapov, first deputy chief of the Main Cadre Directorate; and Colonel General A. Mironov, deputy chief of the Main Cadre Directorate, delivered reports. In the reports and

speeches by conference participants and in the subsequent seminars attention was chiefly devoted to analyzing shortcomings in cadre organs' activities and working out effective work methods meeting contemporary requirements.

News Conference Reported

PM2002145791 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 15 Feb 91 First Edition p 1

[Article by correspondent Lieutenant Colonel V. Zyubin: "New Structures, New Role"]

[Text] A news conference was held at the CPSU Central Committee Press Center 13 February. Soviet and foreign journalists were addressed by Colonel General A. Ovchinnikov, first deputy chief of the Soviet Army and Navy Main Political Directorate, Major General A. Gorbachev, chief of the the Soviet Army and Navy Main Political Directorate Organizational Party Work Directorate, and representatives from the political directorates of the USSR KGB Border Guards, the USSR MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] Internal Troops, and the Railroad Troops.

It was stressed at the news conference that radical changes are currently affecting political organs. The USSR presidential decree of 11 January 1991 ratified the General Statute on Military-Political Organs. These organs are guided in their activity by Soviet laws, other acts passed by the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, the USSR Supreme Soviet, the USSR president, and the USSR Cabinet of Ministers, and orders and directives issued by the USSR defense minister. They, together with other military directorate organs, implement state policy in the sphere of the defense and security of our country, bear the responsibility for training, military discipline, and the political and moral state of the personnel, use political means to ensure the fulfillment of the tasks of combat readiness and combat training, and handle the social and legal protection of servicemen.

It was noted at the news conference that party structures in the Army and Navy have gained full autonomy. They are elected from top to bottom and now organize their activity in accordance with the USSR law "On Public Associations" and the instruction on CPSU organizations' work in the USSR Armed Forces.

Later the Soviet and foreign journalists' numerous questions were answered. These questions concerned the reorganization of party structures, their financing, and their collaboration with other social organizations—particularly the "Shield" Union and the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers.

To a question about whether conditions have been created in the Army for the emergence of other party cells, it was stated that there are currently no party structures in the Armed Forces apart from the CPSU. But this does not mean that somebody is pursuing a policy running counter to the USSR law "On Public Associations." Although, as Col. Gen. A. Ovchinnikov noted, we will not artificially encourage the creation of other party structures.

The following very instructive figures were also revealed at the press conference. Some 3.7 percent more Armed Forces members joined the CPSU in 1990 than in 1989. And losses from party organizations were several times less than from civil party organizations.

The news conference was held in an amicable and businesslike atmosphere.

Baltic MD General Interviewed on Status, Union

LD2002233891 Riga Domestic Service in Latvian 1620 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Station interview with Major General Anatoliy Dmitriyevich Vodopyanov, first deputy commander of Baltic Military District, MD; place and date not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Announcer] [passage omitted] Anatoliy Dmitriyevich, how do you see the future of the USSR Armed Forces on the territory of the Republic of Latvia in about five years' time?

[Vodopyanov] It depends on what tasks are facing them in the defense of our state. The armed forces at the present time are a factor for peace, and I think that it is no secret that since 1945 thanks to the combat might of our armed forces parity has come about, and thanks to that parity we have not had a war in Europe, but if it is necessary, the armed forces will still exist on the territory of the Baltic republics, including the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.

[Announcer] What if in five years time the Republic of Latvia is a sovereign, independent state, but by treaty USSR Armed Forces will be located here?

[Vodopyanov] One may pose any version in theory. That depends not on the armed forces, but on the will and wishes of the Latvian people first and foremost, and probably other factors which will influence it.

[Announce] Did you deliberately stress the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic?

[Vodopyanov] Well, what can I say?

[Announcer, laughing] The truth?

[Vodopyanov] The truth? Yes, I probably would like these transformations taking place here to be within the framework of the Soviet Union. I want the Latvian people to be free, I want this. But I also want there to be a careful weighting up of what stands behind this process, what will happen tomorrow?—separation, full withdrawal, violation of parity, imbalance—this may lay the foundations of a third world war.

[Announcer] So you assume that there exists the threat of a third world war?

[Vodopyanov] Yes, I consider that a third world war is possible.

[Announcer] What do you think, from which side are we threatened with this danger?

[Vodopyanov] I think for Latvia it is immaterial from where it comes, from West or East. Under today's arrangements this cannot arise. But what will happen tomorrow, again, nobody can guarantee. I can tell you one thing: The very latest example is probably the fact that Germany has become united. I understand, the country had to unite. Today we have Kohl, but tomorrow, who? Today one policy, but tomorrow what sort of policy? [passage omitted]

[Announcer] Do you think, like General Filatov, that the undistinguished policy of Shevardnadze and the liberals has led to the fact that we have lost the socialist camp in East Europe?

[Vodopyanov] It seems to me that in this respect there should be a more attentive attitude to all our problems and in relation to treaties. If we want to live in peace, we must have a responsible attitude to all this. But we have an irresponsible attitude.

[Announcer] Do you see a possible threat on the part of America?

[Vodopyanov] Not only America, but any state which has nuclear weapons in its armory and powerful armed forces may pose a threat. It depends on what the system is there, who will come to power. We must be ready for everything. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] What is your attitude to the statement of comrade Alksnis that if the CPSU wavers on the road of preserving the union, then the Army will go it alone, and will fight to the end?

[Vodopyanov] Alksnis is a bold person and to a certain extent evokes fellow-feeling in that he speaks openly. But I think that there should, nevertheless, be more balance in relation to such statements. Where will the Army go? It cannot go by itself without the people, because the Army is a chip, a certain part of the people, and it will precisely reflect the position determined by the people itself. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] Please talk about the Army draft. Essentially, in many republics it has been [word indistinct] disrupted. And there has even been talk of forcible enactment of the draft, of catching deserters and those who are doing alternative service etc. What do you think, if, God forbid, your apprehensions are not in vain and a war breaks out and we start to fight, will such an Army be capable [words indistinct], will they fight, and on whose side?

[Vodopyanov] I think it would be an insignificantly small percentage on the one hand. On the other, in that situation people will think differently.

[Announcer] That's what you hope?

[Vodopyanov] It's not what I hope, I am sure, 100 percent sure.

[Announcer] So Lithuanian young men will defend the Soviet Union?

[Vodopyanov] First and foremost, it will be Lithuania that they will be defending, within the Soviet Union. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] Anatoliy Dmitriyevich, is it true you will have a new commander? That's what people are saying.

[Vodopyanov] I think that the commander will change. I think that our commander, Colonel General Kuzmin deserves promotion, but as to when that will happen, I don't know. [passage omitted]

Official Assesses Moves for Republican Armies

PM0502134591 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 2 Feb 91 First Edition p 5

[Interview with Major General Leonid Grigoryevich Ivashov, chief of USSR Defense Ministry Administration of Affairs and candidate of historical sciences, by Major Yu. Rubtsov; date and place not given: "Ambitions and the Logic of Life; Who Came Up With the Idea of National Military Units and Why"]

[Excerpts] Major General L.G. Ivashov, chief of the USSR Defense Ministry Administration of Affairs and a candidate of historical sciences who has studied problems of national military organizational development over a number of years, answers KRASNAYA ZVEZDA's questions.

[Rubtsov] Leonid Grigoryevich, although B.N. Yeltsin has tried to disavow his own statement on the possibility of forming a Russian army, the campaign to set up national military units has nevertheless received a new boost..

[Ivashov] Undoubtedly so. I would remind you that the head of the Russian legislature made his statement, which was later described as emotional, after the well known events in Vilnius. It was taken most seriously in the country. As we know, USSR President M.S. Gorbachev evaluated the situation in this way on 22 January: "Events in the Baltic are being used speculatively as a pretext for raising the question of dismembering our Armed Forces and setting up republic armies.

"These irresponsible statements are fraught with serious consequences, especially if they come from the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] leadership."

It must be taken into account that a number of republics—in the Baltic, and also Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia—have already taken practical steps to create national armed units. These are given various names for

the purposes of disguise: territorial protection detachments, self-defense detachments, republican guard, etc. But this should not mislead the public: What is being set up is a military organization with a clear command system, a system of military training and military discipline, action plans, and other attributes. All this contravenes the USSR Constitution and the USSR president's decree "On Banning the Creation of Armed Units Not Envisaged by USSR Legislation..." [passage omitted]

[Rubtsov] What in your view is prompting individual republics to demand national military units and practically reestablish them?

[Ivashov] There may be various motives. There is the desire—if sovereignty has already been proclaimed—to make independent decisions on defense questions, and there are political ambitions. Admittedly, there are also more serious plans. In some places a repressive apparatus for crushing dissent and creating future dictatorships is essentially being created.

Let us turn to the statute on the republican guard ratified by the Moldova Supreme Soviet 2 November 1990. At first glance this is a voluntary public organization, but its members' powers go far beyond these bounds. For instance, the "guards" have the right to inspect documents and to detain and search citizens. They are allowed to employ "special equipment." The structure of the "guard" is extremely rigid: from the primary organization consisting of three men through units on a republican scale. Surely this is reminiscent of something from recent history?

[Rubtsov] Leonid Grigoryevich, since we have turned to history, could we not seek there some hint as to how to harmonize relations between the center and the republics in the sphere of defense?

[Ivashov] I agree, the lessons of the past are highly instructive. Why, for instance, do we not consider resurrecting the institution of military department representatives under union republic governments which existed until the mid-thirties? In turn the republics' representatives responsible for military questions could collaborate more closely with the Defense Ministry.

Incidentally, a series of detailed Defense Ministry proposals is already being implemented, others have been incorporated in the draft concept for military reform and the draft USSR Defense Law. The idea of greater republic participation than previously in the formulation and implementation of defense policy is at the heart of these documents. The participation of the supreme organs of power and administration of the subjects of the renewed USSR in determining the size of the Armed Forces, drawing up the defense budget, and resolving problems relating to the deployment and activity of troops and military installations is also indispensable in this respect.

At the same time republic bodies should bear responsibility in accordance with the USSR Constitution for implementing union defense legislation on their territory, including the training of young people for military service and the drafting of them.

One thing is clear: The destruction of the all-Union defense structure and attempts to set up republic armies do not hold up from either the political, economic, or moral point of view.

Baltic Republics

Lithuania Adopts Decision on March Referendum

LD2002143991 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1300 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Lithuanian authorities are consistently giving people of other nationalities the status of foreigners. Here is a quote: The USSR citizens residing in Lithuania may be given a chance to express their opinions on the future of their country if the Soviet Union appeals for conditions to be created for them to take part in the referendum to be held on 17 March. That is the quote. This decision was adopted by the Presidium of the Lithuanian Supreme Council and was reported to journalists by Azubalis, the republican legislature's representative for information.

Lithuanian Supreme Council Adopts Proposals

LD2002144291 Vilnius International Service in Lithuanian 0100 GMT 20 Feb 91

[By announcer Darius Tarasevicius]

[Text] Proposals to the USSR Supreme Soviet have been adopted by the Lithuanian legislature today.

The adopted document says that while stressing that the restoration of the rights of the Republic of Lithuania that had been violated is not the matter of the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, and implementing the act of 11 March and making a declaration about the latest demonstration of the will of the Lithuanian people in the 9 February nationwide public opinion poll, and confirming Lithuania's aspiration to restore legal relations between the Republic of Lithuania and the Soviet Union which were ruptured in 1940 and while following the path of the principles and norms of the international law, the Lithuanian Supreme Council makes this appeal to the USSR Supreme Soviet and proposes:

1. To assess the recent illegal acts carried out in the Republic of Lithuania by the USSR military force, especially the violence against unarmed peaceful civilians on 13 January.

2. To authorize the executive authority of the Soviet Union to return the state installations occupied by Soviet troops in January without delay and to withdraw from Lithuania's territory the repressive military force and the units from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Committee for State Security.

3. To recognize that the the USSR Supreme Soviet decision of 3 August 1940 concerning the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union was a consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact which formally completed the annexation of Lithuania and, therefore, from the legal viewpoint does not bind the Republic of Lithuania and the Soviet Union.

4. To authorize the USSR state delegation to start negotiations with the state delegation of the Republic of Lithuania. The objective of the negotiations would be the recognition of the independence of the Republic of Lithuania and signing a relevant treaty between our states.

Proceedings Instituted Against Vilnius Commander

LD2002234191 Vilnius Radio Vilnius in Lithuanian 2000 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Information has been received from the general procuracy of the Repubic of Lithuania that criminal proceedings have begun against Vilnius military commandant Colonel Belous. He is accused of unlawfully detaining on 12 February independent military experts who represented the Shchit [Shield] organization.

Lithuanian Presidential Rule Supporter Dismissed

PM1802135591 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 16 Feb 91 Second Edition p 4

[Report by I. Barkunas: "Dismissed for Dissent"]

[Text] Vilnius—Many telegrams have reached USSR President M.S. Gorbachev from Lithuania recently. They have contained demands to introduce direct presidential rule and to disband parliament. PRAVDA has also reported on them. A telegram of this kind was sent to the president by I. Yakulis, construction engineer from the "Rimenay" state farm, Alitusskiy Rayon, whose surname has already figured in newspapers. I admit that I immediately telephoned the editorial office and asked them in future not to publish the names of Lithuanian communists in order not to make them vulnerable to the separatist forces.

A few days later I telephoned Yakulis and here is what I learned from him:

"The issue of PRAVDA which gave my name immediately found its way into the hands of a pro-Sajudis group of people. They began to tour the homes of the farm workers, show them the newspaper, and demand their support over my dismissal. Then a general meeting was held at which this group demanded that the director dismiss me. Far from everyone supported that demand, but the director realized that the local extremists, taking advantage of the rayon authorities' support, would not calm down anyway and he suggested to me that I leave. Today I am unemployed..."

...Is any comment on the event necessary? I think now. It is one more graphic example of how dissenters are dealt with in Lithuania.

Western Leaders Cited on Baltics Issue

PM1502165391 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 14 Feb 91 Union Edition p 1

[Item in roundup of IZVESTIYA, TASS, INTERFAX, UPI, and REUTERS reports: "Western Policy on the Baltic Region"]

[Text] British Prime Minister J. Major has declared in the legislature: "I would like the Soviet authorities to hold talks with the elected Baltic authorities on the aspirations of the latter. I hope to be able to raise this question with President Gorbachev when I meet with him next month."

Seiler-Albring, minister of state at the FRG Foreign Ministry, declared that the FRG Government supports the Lithuanians' desire to realize their right to self-determination. At the same time, she emphasized, "we cannot proceed from the premise that independence will be realized by means of a unilateral statement." She did not rule out the possibility that missions will be established on a mutual basis in the FRG and Lithuania, "if trends toward the recognition of Lithuania are manifested in the course of the dialogue between Vilnius and the USSR central government, if violence is not used in the future, and if the Balts recognize the rights of their Soviet citizens."

An Austrian Foreign Ministry spokesman declared that "recognition of Lithuania is not a very urgent juridical matter."

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs issued a statement which reads: "The time has not yet come to restore diplomatic relations with Lithuania. First a statement must be made on the independence of Lithuania within the framework of talks with Soviet official organs."

Prunskiene Plans To Form Opposition

91UN0892A Moscow LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in Russian No 6, 13 Feb 91 pp 1-2

[Interview with Kazimiera Prunskiene, former Lithuanian prime minister, by V. Zapevalov in Bonn; date not given: "I Am in the Opposition"]

[Text] [Zapevalov] A lot of false rumors are going around about your disappearance from Lithuania. Is it not about time to raise the curtain of secrecy? Why did you leave, and why specifically for the FRG?

[Prunskiene] The answer is very simple. I have become accustomed to being active in life. One week in the Lithuanian legislature, therefore, was enough to convince myself that that type of activity will not allow me to realize myself fully. In addition, I understand that our problem is not being decided only within the framework of Lithuania, and that it is necessary to attract an even greater interest by the West for the purpose of promoting a reasonable resolution of the problems of all of the Baltic states. Colleagues also advised me to take this step, and, specifically, Prime Minister Savisaar of Estonia, who also believes that all possibilities have to be acted upon.

[Zapevalov] Was the objective of your trip achieved?

[Prunskiene] There are still 10 days of diligent work in store for me. Representing the organization "Help for Lithuania," I meet, within the scope of its program, with politicians, journalists, and business people who are giving us or are ready to give us some kind of assistance. I especially single out meetings with representatives of Catholic organizations, with Doctor Leman, a representative of the Episcopal Conference of Catholics of the FRG, and other leading figures of the church.

[Zapevalov] Are you acting on instructions of Lithuanian authorities and its government and at your own risk?

[Prunskiene] I do not maintain contact with the Lithuanian Government. The emergence of the current cabinet, and more precisely, its leadership, is the result of the efforts of extreme right forces who are pursuing their own objectives. Believe me, it is not slighted ambitions in me that are talking. I am continuing work now that I was doing even before I assumed the prime minister's position. My objective is to promote Lithuania's movement toward independence. But an independence that is not an abstract declaration, but rather a reinforcement of desire with specific deeds. Of course, I inform Lithuania, its legislature, my colleagues, and like thinkers of my activity. My efforts are directed not only at helping Lithuania, but also at supporting all of the Baltic states. It is necessary to submit our problems for international consideration. The position of the West with respect to the Baltics is now an inadequate situation. It must move from a formal declaration of support for our aspirations for independence to condemnation of the acts of Moscow's employment of military force, and to real actions. I visited Brussels, and I talked with commissions where assistance is being readied for the Soviet Union. The question concerns rather large sums. I expressed my views on this score. I think that it is necessary to change the principle for giving aid. Up until now, assistance to the USSR meant for the West assistance to Gorbachev. After the January events in Lithuania and Latvia, it was decided in the EEC to suspend acts of assistance to the Soviet Union. This is not true. It will not be Moscow that will suffer, and not the central leadership, but the people. It is necessary to give assistance under specific projects and to specific addressees, and to implement it directly through the republics. Because the support of the center is the support of centralism and the opportunity to use this assistance to pressure us. It seemed to me that my views were heeded: The budget commission intends to recommend that the higher organs of the EEC count on decentralized assistance.

[Zapevalov] On the whole, however, the West, especially the FRG, continues to take a rather restrained position with respect to events in the Baltics...

[Prunskiene] This caution and restraint are explained by the apprehensions concerning the military might of the Soviet Union and the unpredictability of its actions in the event of an outbreak of political disputes. The West is not convinced that pressure on Moscow will not lead to some kind of negative foreign political consequences and internal political changes. The FRG is striving to adhere strictly to the obligations it made in treaties with the USSR, and it is concerned for the fate of the unratified agreement on the results of the "two plus four" negotiations. Finally, the West has new European interests: A war is going on in the Persian Gulf, and the position of the Soviet Union plays a big role here.

[Zapevalov] How do you assess the recent steps of the USSR president with respect to the Baltics, in particular the appointment of a delegation to conduct negotiations with Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia?

[Prunskiene] These are formal actions that in no way resolve the issue, and that do not bring a solution any closer.

[Zapevalov] But this is a serious step to the beginning of negotiations, and this is what the Baltic republics are striving for.

[Prunskiene] If the negotiations really start and will have a businesslike character, and they do not become the usual attempt to procrastinate, which the Soviet delegation has been engaged in since October of last year.

[Zapevalov] What ultimate objective should these negotiations pursue?

[Prunskiene] It is already clear: The Baltic republics will not return to the Union. We are ready, however, for a certain time—we will call it a transitional phase—to make some concessions and compromises that are conditioned by our many years of being in the USSR. In particular, to conclude an agreement on the conditions of a temporary stay of the Soviet Army on our territory. Afterwards—bilateral concessions in economic relations. We are interested in receiving resources from the USSR, and Moscow would like to have our foodstuffs, etc. Relations should be built on a good-neighbor basis, so that crisis situations are not created. For example, we are told: Starting the first of April, immediately after the signing of the treaty, you will pay for oil with hard currency. But for 50 years we were forced to sell foodstuffs not for hard currency, although, had we been independent, we would have received hard money for it. Both sides have to reject categorical positions—they do not promote a normalization of the dialogue.

[Zapevalov] As I understand, you are against participation in work on a new Union treaty?

[Prunskiene] At the present moment, I am unequivocally against it. Taking part in it would denote acknowledging that we are a Union republic. Our task now is to establish an independent state and to stand on our feet. Only afterwards will we decide with which states in the East and in the West we will join in alliances, communities, or other forms of cooperation. By that time, I hope that it will become clear what the new Soviet Union represents. If it rids itself of imperial manners and recognizes the existence of new independent states next to it, we can become a rather profitable partner.

[Zapevalov] There is a lot of speculation in the press regarding your disagreements with Landsbergis. How much is truth and fabrication here?

[Prunskiene] I know Landsbergis from the days of the creation of Sajudis. I did not have any personal conflicts with him. We are different people, with different experiences and approaches to problems. These different approaches surfaced in May of last year especially, when there was a question of the strategy of our movement for negotiations with Moscow. In the summer, time was working for Lithuania, and it was necessary to take advantage of this, and not to put anything off into the future. We also differed in assessments of the sharing of jurisdictions between the legislature and the government. In my opinion, the government is not a technical service, and it cannot be led by deputies, but by the legislature. Therefore, when the legislature decided to stop our price reform—and we worked on it for many months and coordinated it with Estonia and Latvia—I decided to resign.

[Zapevalov] When are you returning to Lithuania?

[Prunskiene] I plan to go to Prague first, although, as I understand, the USSR is attempting to persuade the Czechoslovak authorities not to have any dealings with us. Then again to the FRG. I hope to return home by the end of February. I want to achieve a consolidation there on positions of constructive actions. It is necessary to switch our state life over from "idling."

[Zapevalov] That is, you intend to establish an opposition to the new government of Lithuania?

[Prunskiene] Yes. But to be in opposition for me is not an end in itself, or a way of getting a "seat." It is a work dialogue for the purpose of achieving results for Lithuania and for its people. As public opinion polls show, the people support the leaders of the former government. It is necessary to justify their trust and hopes.

Communist Activists Print Newspaper in Vilnius

LD1302231391 Vilnius International Service in English 2230 GMT 13 Feb 91

[Excerpts] The Moscow KURANTY carries information from unofficial sources saying that the military procurator's office has initiated legal proceedings against a number of servicemen of military units stationed (?of Moscow) [for looting]. [passage omitted]

The loot is reported to have been taken away from the soldiers. In their turn pro-Moscow communist officials commissioned to maintain with the administration of the Lithuanian Radio and television have hinted that each new wave of Soviet soldiers sent to guard the occupied building were looting the radio and television equipment.

There's news also from another captured building in Vilnius, the newspaper publishing house. On 11 January the staff of over a dozen Lithuanian newspapers were turned out of the building. The printworks stayed idle for a month, because all the printers had refused to collaborate with the occupants, but the Communist Party activists managed to recruit a team of workers in neighboring Belorussia and Russia, and today they started printing their newspaper SOVIET LITHUANIA in the printworks of the seized press house.

Lithuanian Communist Papers 'Unlawfully' Banned

LD1902204891 Moscow TASS in English 2032 GMT 19 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Serafim Bykhun]

[Text] Vilnius February 19 Tass—The TARIBU LIETUVA, SOVETSKAYA LITVA, and OTCHIZNA newspapers, published by the Lithuanian Communist Party, have not been on sale at Vilnius news-stands since February 14. Subscribers do not receive these newspapers either.

This action is unlawful and originated in the republican parliament which intends to enforce the enactment of the law "on political parties", a spokesman at the production and publishing sector of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee told TASS.

This law was adopted in September last year and bans the activities of the Lithuanian Communist Party as an "organisation of another state".

Bomb Explodes in Tallinn Hospital

LD2102102191 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 1000 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] As we have already reported, at 0100 this morning a bomb exploded at the prenatal clinic of the Tallinn Pelgulinna maternity hospital. As a result of the explosion the front door was destroyed and 13 office windows were broken. At the time of the explosion there were 233 patients in the maternity hospital. The explosion was so strong that the whole building shook. According to preliminary data nobody was injured. A special team is conducting an investigation.

Estonia To Take Up Iceland Mediation Offer

LD2002142291 Stockholm International Service in English 1230 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] After a stopover in Stockholm, the prime minister and the foreign minister of Estonia are on their way to Iceland which has already boosted Baltic hopes by declaring that it is prepared to respond to Lithuania's appeal for recognition. Radio Sweden's Lydia Hagstrom met the Estonian foreign minister, Lennart Meri, during his stopover here where he said the Estonians intend to take up the offer made by Icelandic Foreign Minister Jon Hannibalsson during his recent visit to the Estonian capital Tallinn.

[Begin recording] [Meri] We would like to ask his government and him personally to mediate between Estonia and the Soviet Union, between the Baltic states and the Soviet Union. We have never succeeded in having the Soviets behind a negotiation table. So it is our hope that Iceland will be ready to act in an intermediate role and we are ready to start immediately with bilateral consultations and we hope that the Soviet Government will, in her turn, do the same with an Icelandic delegation so that we can somehow defuse this deadlock.

[Hagstrom] But do you think that Iceland will be a good mediator considering that its relations with the Soviet Union are a bit shaken in view of Iceland's recognition of Lithuania?

[Meri] I think that, nevertheless, Iceland will play a very constructive part. Iceland is a small democratic country. It has, perhaps, a better understanding for the needs of such small countries as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. On the other side, Iceland is a republic with the world's oldest parliament that is not only something symbolic but it has very strong moral weight and we certainly hope that Iceland will succeed. [end recording]

Estonia's Savisaar, Meri Depart for Iceland

LD1802111491 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 1800 GMT 17 Feb 91

[Text] Today, Edgar Savisaar, chairman of the Republic of Estonia, left for a visit to Iceland, at the invitation of the Islandic Government. Estonian Foreign Minister Lennart Meri is accompanying Edgar Savisaar on his visit. On their way to Reyjkjavik the Estonian governmental delegation will stop over at Stockholm, where several meetings have been planned with Swedish and Estonian public figures.

Estonian Government Introduces New Taxation

LD1902130191 Moscow TASS in English 1226 GMT 19 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Albert Maloveryan]

[Text] Tallinn February 19 TASS—The Edgar Savisaar government is fleecing the Estonian people, said many Estonian lawmakers here today.

Republican legislators got this impression after they read "the bill on changes in the law of the Estonian Republic on the excise tax" submitted to parliament.

It turned out that the excise tax on strong beverages and cigarettes introduced in the republic a year ago had been meant to operate until a tax on retail turnover was enacted.

The retail turnover tax was introduced on January 10, 1991, raising prices for all goods by seven per cent.

Since the excise tax was not repealed, customers paid the excise and turnover taxes when buying wines, vodka and cigarettes.

How to pay money back to the people and call the government to account for violations of laws? Lawmakers will discuss this question while examining the bill at the forthcoming session.

USSR, Estonian Interior Ministers in Talks

LD1502173191 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 1800 GMT 14 Feb 91

[Text] ETA reports that today Olev Laanjarv, Estonian minister of internal affairs, took part in a conference in Moscow chaired by [passage indistinct]. Issues connected with the implementation of the Estonian police law were discussed. According to the agreement concluded on 1 August last year—the so-called Savisaar-Bakatin agreement—it was decided to set up a bilateral commission [word indistinct] which would finally regulate the relations between the Estonian and USSR Ministries of Internal Affairs. A promise was given that former militia workers will continue to be paid a pension by Moscow in the future.

[Words indistinct] Olev Laanjarv met with USSR Internal Affairs Minister Boris Pugo, who accepted the Estonian replacement of militia structures with police structures. The preservation of the Estonian Ministry of Internal Affairs as a complete system was the main issue under discussion. Pugo confirmed that he will not agree to taking under immediate subordination any alternative Estonian internal affairs body, for example the internal affairs directorate in northeast Estonia. Interior Minister Pugo agreed with the position of our government abandoning the use of joint militia and army patrols.

Olev Laanjarv privately met with Vadim Bakatin, former USSR minister of internal affairs and member of the Presidential Council, in the Kremlin. Having been forced to leave by the conservatives [words indistinct] the situation in the Baltic states after the January crisis. Bakatin gave to understand unambiguously that despite the grave accusations raised against the president he still considers himself [words indistinct] Gorbachev. Tomorrow Oleg Laanjarv [words indistinct] will be present—together with his Latvian and Lithuanian colleagues—at an extended session of the collegium of the USSR Minister of Internal Affairs.

Savisaar on Republican Government Heads Meeting

LD1802161391 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 0900 GMT 16 Feb 91

[Interview with Estonian Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar by Kaja Karner in Tallinn—live]

[Excerpts] [Karner] The two most important events at the end of the week in Tallinn were the human rights conference and the so-called fourth Tallinn meeting where governmental delegations from Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Kirghizistan and Estonia and representations from Moscow and Leningrad City Councils met. Much has already been said about the human rights conference but what was the importance of these Tallinn consultations to the Estonian economy and politics?

[Savisaar] I would like to begin on a slightly more philosophical note this time. Times are such that everything is reduced to our endeavors to be free. So if we talk about freedom what are we actually trying to be free of? We are trying to be free of the Moscow diktat, we are trying to be free of prescriptions. [passage omitted] There have been practically no direct links between republics. The aim of our meetings is to forge direct links with republics and Union republics or with towns; direct links of the kind which meet the interests of their self-determination and economy and which would be implemented not according to somebody's absurd allocation plans but according to the laws of the market economy. Once such links have been forged a sudden understanding may down that the center's coordinating and centralizing role—which also profits somebody—is not necessary at all. That indeed will be the path to independence. [passage omitted]

Yesterday and the day before, for example, we discussed and clarified border issues: when should customs duty be paid and when not. There was much talk about a price formation policy, foreign trade principles, banking, tourism. Today, Saturday, the Federation Council will meet again in Moscow and it is very important that, for example, in matters of price reform the governments of Moldova and Kirgizstan represent those positions which we agreed upon in Tallinn. This way we will indeed combine forces in the fight for interests, for common interests. [passage omitted]

We have, of course, organized these consultations first and foremost for economic issues, but we cannot bypass politics completely. [passage omitted] This time we presented the government's position on the matter of the referendum. As the central press distorts our positions to a considerable extent at least at government level we can achieve clarity with the help of these consultations. [passage omitted]

However, the main emphasis of these consultations has been on the economy. [passage omitted]

Estonian Bank Official Views Cash Shortage

LD1502132591 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 1000 GMT 15 Feb 91

[Report by correspondent Ene Veiksaar, including live or recorded interview with Aleksey Belyayev, first deputy chairman of the Estonian branch of the USSR State Bank, place and date not given]

[Excerpt] Recently, money has caused serious worry to a number of people: getting wage money, pensions, and even money on exchange. Does it look now more hopeful, Ene Veiksaar?

[Veiksaar] During the last three weeks, the main worry for those who have telephoned our editorial office has been money. Assurances were given all along that there is enough money for payments to be made, but now the situation is that some establishments cannot obtain cash from the bank—and for this reason salaries to employees have not been paid. According to information received yesterday, however, we can say that cash has arrived in Tallinn. Aleksey Belyayev, first deputy chairman of the Estonian Republican Bank of the USSR State Bank—how would you comment on this information? Will the situation ease?

[Belyayev] Yes indeed, difficulties have arisen on this matter, but as you have noted this problem was resolved yesterday, and all our bank establishments have obtained their additional cash. Today and tomorrow all pensions will be paid out to pensioners, and the cash that has not as yet been fully received will next week, by about Wednesday, be paid out in full for what is owed. [passage omitted]

Latvian Supreme Council Tightens Voting Laws

LD1902204491 Riga Domestic Service in Latvian 1400 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] The Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia, at its plenary sitting today, discussed a draft law whereby amendments will be made to several paragraphs in the Criminal Code of the Latvian SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] and the Administrative Offences Code of the Latvian SSR. These are paragraphs that include the norms on disrupting the order of elections, but this time these amendments are aimed at observing the organization of polls of the people or referenda in the republic as well as their procedure.

Thus, it is intended that the text of Paragraph 129 of the Criminal Code will be changed to this: Delays in fulfilling voters rights and inhabitants' right to vote in a poll or referendum may be punished by deprivation of freedom for up to three years, or corrective labor for up to two years, or a fine of up to 10,000 rubles [R].

But Paragraph 130 will provide that falsification of documents, untruthful counting of votes, or violation of the secret ballot in a poll of inhabitants or a referendum will be punished by deprivation of freedom of up to three years, or corrective labor for up to two years, or a fine of up to R15,000.

Two more paragraphs have been changed: There is an addition connected with the organization of polls or referenda, that is, on the non-presentation of information and materials or on agitation on the day of election of people's deputies and of polls of the people and referenda. This draft law is being accepted at the moment by parliament on its first reading; therewith it will also be (?returned) in the afternoon plenary sitting.

Another item on the agenda was the resolution adopted on 8 January this year on the illegal introduction of special units of the USSR Armed Forces onto the territory of the Republic of Latvia, on the rescinding of Paragraph 2 of this resolution; that is, in view of the fact that the situation in the republic has stabilized, as the chairman of the Defense and Internal Affairs Commission, Talavs Jundzis, stated, the need for this resolution has lost validity. Talavs Jundzis this morning spoke with the deputy military commissar of Latvia, (Teimers) and ascertained that in January and February, 300 boys were called up into the USSR Armed Forces from the territory of Latvia, and at the moment the call-up has been ended. Until May we are not threatened by call-up in the sense that was to be expected in January, says Talavs Jundzis. The Supreme Council, by 72 votes, voted for such a resolution, which takes effect from 25 February, and thus boys that are involved in alternative service on Monday, 25 February, must start work.

French Daily Interviews Latvia's Jurkans

PM1502155691 Paris LE FIGARO in French 14 Feb 91 p 7

[Interview with Latvian Foreign Minister Janis Jurkans by Baudouin Bollaert in Brussels; date not given]

[Excerpt] Brussels—[passage omitted] [Bollaert] "Nobody listens to us," the Estonian novelist K. Ristiviki wrote 50 years ago. Do you still share this feeling?

[Jurkans] We know that the Baltic problem is very embarrassing for the Western countries... Especially since there are numerous analogies between the Baltic countries' annexation by the USSR and Kuwait's annexation by Iraq. In one instance, they intervened. In the other, they did not because the strategic and economic stakes are not the same. You could call that selfishness.

[Bollaert] Are you disappointed with the West?

[Jurkans] It is difficult for it to find the right strategy. Its biggest mistake was to put all its eggs in one basket, by setting its sights on a single man: Mikhail Gorbachev. Now Gorbachev has changed. He allowed the democratization process to prosper in the USSR, but he was not

its initiator. So it is not too difficult for him now to restrict glasnost. We have not forgotten the taste of freedom. We are not impatient, but we want to regain what we lost in 1940 thanks to the German-Soviet pact between Hitler and Stalin.

[Bollaert] Are you really going the right way about it?

[Jurkans] We must internationalize the issue, particularly by showing the dangers of the present decline in the USSR. In my opinion, everything that is going on in the Baltic countries is carefully organized by the military and could affect central Europe tomorrow. Many important figures in Moscow have still not accepted German reunification, the liberalization of the East, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, or the withdrawal from Afghanistan...

[Bollaert] Does the Gulf war provide an umbrella for them?

[Jurkans] It could provide the necessary smokescreen for them to regain power. Soviet troops have killed people in Vilnius. They could kill more tomorrow in Poland, Czechoslovakia, or elsewhere... We warned the West back in October.

But in the fever of preparations for the CSCE summit our message went unheeded. In December Eduard Shevardnadze's resignation confirmed our fears. His resignation was a turning point.

[Bollaert] Is Gorbachev a puppet in the military's hands?

[Jurkans] He needs them—as he does the police and the KGB—to counter Boris Yeltsin, to oppose the Baltic countries' independence, and basically to preserve the Soviet empire. For their part, the military need him, becuse he still enjoys great popularity in the Wst. They use him as a symbol of democracy abroad to enable the USSR to continue receiving Western financial aid.

[Bollaert] Are you for or against this aid?

[Jurkans] It all depends on the channels through which it is distributed... Too often it is the nomenklatura that benefits. So it must be distributed through safe channels: the churches, certain labor unions or political parties, and so forth. It is also a way of exerting pressure to make Gorbachev negotiate.

Moscow has not taken a single step toward us, but we do want to negotiate. We know that our accession to independence depends on the outcome of the democratization process in the USSR.

[Bollaert] After Lithuania last Sunday, Estonia and Latvia are to hold a "self-determination" referendum 3 March. Will you take part in the 17 March referendum organized by Gorbachev throughout the USSR?

[Jurkans] Definitely not. That would be like asking the Kuwaitis to take part in a referendum organized by Saddam Husayn...

Latvia's Godmanis Visits Germany 14-17 Feb

LD1402221491 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1900 GMT 14 Feb 91

[Text] At the invitation of FRG Chancellor Kohl, Godmanis, chairman of the Latvian Council of Ministers, left for Bonn today. It was stated by the Latvian News Agency that in the course of this visit, which is to last until 17 February, Godmanis intends to meet with representatives of German leadership and business circles. A wide range of problems connected with strengthening Latvia's political and economic independence will be discussed.

Holds Talks With Kohl

LD1502180391 Riga Domestic Service in Latvian 1400 GMT 15 Feb 91

[Text] Ivars Godmanis, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, is on an official visit to Germany. As foreign information sources report, during the meeting with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Ivars Godmanis informed Kohl about the situation in the Baltics and stated his proposals on how to solve the problems in this region. Helmut Kohl pointed out that the Baltic problem must, in the interests of all states in Europe, be solved only by peaceful means. A further meeting is anticipated among the Latvian premier, Latvian Foreign Minister Janis Jurkans and Willy Brandt, chairman of the Socialist International. Ivars Godmanis will give a news conference in Bonn today. Several significant meetings are envisaged tomorrow in Hanover.

Media Briefed on Visit

LD1902205791 Riga Domestic Service in Latvian 1830 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] A news conference on the recent Latvian Government visit to Germany took place today at the Council of Ministers. Unfortunately, because of illness, Ivars Godmanis could not participate in it.

Arijs Ziverts, deputy director general of the Department of Foreign Economic Relations, answered journalists' questions and spoke about the economic results of this visit. I think that the visit was valuable and very purposeful, he said. We had prepared ourselves well for this visit. The level of the meeting was so high that it was not possible to discuss in detail all our proposals for economic cooperation. However, we received Germany's agreement in principle and support for our endeavours of returning in a democratic way to the economic circulation of Europe. As for the more significant undertakings for the national economy of Latvia, I would like to mention our joint projects in technologies of production of building materials and agricultural machinery, and in ecological protection of the Baltic Sea and environment.

Further Reportage on Godmanis Visit

WA1902181091

For reportage on the visit by Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis to Germany, including reports on his talks with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and other officials on support for Latvian independence, please see the Germany section of the 19 February West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

RSFSR

RSFSR Deputies Denounce Yeltsin Interview

LD2102095691 Moscow World Service in English 0900 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] A political statement has been read out at the morning sitting of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation with a demand to convene an extraordinary congress of republican MP's and denouncing the stand taken by Boris Yeltsin. It was signed and read out by deputy chairman of the Russian parliament Svetlana Goryacheva with signatures by five more members of parliamentary leadership. Yeltsin's First Deputy [Supreme Soviet Presidium Chairman] Ruslan Khasbulatov has not subscribed to the statement.

The document denounces the interview that the chairman of Russia's parliament, Boris Yeltsin, granted to state television in which he demanded the resignation of President Gorbachev and transfer of power in the country into the hands of a Council of the Federation.

The authors of the statement are insisting that Boris Yeltsin has failed to live up to the expectations pinned on him by the people for revival of Russia and restoration of its economic and political sovereignty. Yeltsin's policies, says the statement, are being determined by him alone in cooperation with a narrow group of people and not only result in the deterioration of the USSR, but the Russian Federation as well. Supporters of the statement demanded that Boris Yeltsin report on his activities to a full Congress of People's Deputies. There is a (?vivid) clash of opinion on the issue in parliament with applause being heard both in support of speeches to adhere to the statement and against them.

Call for Extraordinary Congress

LD2102080591 Moscow TASS in English 0748 GMT 21 Feb 91

[By TASS legislative correspondent]

[Text] Moscow February 21 TASS—A proposal to convene an extraordinary congress of Russian people's deputies without delay and to consider at it an account by Russian parliament President Boris Yeltsin was put forward at the Russian parliament session here today.

A political statement read out by parliament Vice President Svetlana Goryacheva points out that "Boris Yeltsin is unable to bring the activities of the Supreme Soviet back to the road of consolidation and constructive work".

The statement was signed in particular by Russian parliament Vice Presidents Svetlana Goryacheva and Boris Isayev and by chairmen of the parliamentary chambers Vladimir Isakov and Ramazan Abdulatipov.

Various Reactions by Deputies Noted

LD2002145291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1300 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] [No dateline as received] The reaction of Russian people's deputies to the television interview by Boris Yeltsin, leader of the republic's legislature demanding the resignation of USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev can be said to range from complete rejection to complete support.

"The demand for the head of state's resignation is confrontational," in the opinion of Aleksandr Sokolov, member of the Politburo and secretary of the Russian Communist Party. He is a cochairman of the "Communists of Russia" group of deputies in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] Supreme Soviet. In the view of Aleksandr Sokolov, this idea is not constructive and "it just was not worth going on the air for this". "This demand will not strengthen the situation and will not add to the prestige of Boris Yelstin as chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet," stated the member of the Russian legislature.

Yuriy Luchinskiy, a Russian deputy and active member of the "Democratic Russia" group saw "nothing terrible" about the demand for Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation. Supporting Boris Yeltsin's position, he said, "This is not the first time that we have moved toward confronation."

Colonel General Dmitriy Volkogonov, an academic historian, member of the Russian Supreme Soviet, and one of the leaders of the "Left Center" group described Boris Yeltsin's demand as "perfectly natural". At the same time, in his view, all opportunities for compromise have not yet been exhausted. For by "facing each other down without giving an inch we will leave only ashes," said Dmitriy Volkogonov.

Politburo Member Attacks Interview

LD2002234791 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1650 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Studio interview with Ivan Ivanovich Antonovich, Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Communist Party Politburo member, by political observer Valeriy Korzin on 20 February; from the "Topical Interview" program—recorded]

[Text] [Korzin] Good evening. Ivan Ivanovich Antonovich, Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] Communist Party Politburo member, has come

to our studio today. As far as I understand it, the desire to share his thoughts with viewers came to him after yesterday's interview with Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin.

[Antonovich] In effect an atmosphere of expectation has been whipped up about this interview. Yesterday, for example, I awaited and watched it with great interest. There are a number of reasons for this. Boris Nikolayevich is a major and talented politician. He is able to charm his audience. Yesterday when I listened to him and watched him saying that he was ready to serve Russia to the end of his days I believed him and emphathized with him. I am sure that millions of television viewers felt the desire to help him in this noble cause.

However the last five minutes which were not an interview but an official statement by Boris Nikolayevich caused me great bewilderment and disquiet and, I will say simply, a definite desire not to agree with him, to make a sharp rejoinder to him. He allowed himself to make a statement in which he totally improperly assessed the activities of Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, USSR president and Central Committe general secretary. He found it necessary to dissociate himself from him and from the center.

I must say honestly that even the next day I am still under the effect of heavy thoughts and reflections about the future. Well, what will happen next? The whole country, the whole Russian Federation, is demanding with one voice that the two leaders, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev and Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, find a common language and unite their efforts, experience, and talents in order to extricate the country from the crisis.

Here however a war has been declared. If you like, a proposal has been made for a coup d'etat. For if you dissociate yourself from the president of the country it is not simply from the president, and from the Cabinet of Ministers—during the interview the new Prime Minister Pavlov received a whole range of reproaches which in my opinion are unfair—and from the activity of the central government. Then there is a split. What will happen then? How are we to live? How can we halt civil discord and the growth of negative processes?

In this sense when you escape from the charm of the address and begin to switch on a rational analysis then you understand that the main question which was asked of Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin—Will we live better? —was in fact left unanswered. I did not hear any specific creative program for the future and I did not hear any specific promises to work on the most painful points: the collapse of the economy, the deterioration of the working people's material position—only a declaration of war, and the excuse that he was not the one who started it.

How do we understand who started this? What meaning does it have today? Who started this war of laws? It should have been finished. We need to unite efforts, to consolidate the center. My personal deep disappointment lies in the fact that I did not hear it. I would like today to appeal to television viewers and to condemn this policy, this position, and this statement which is aimed at splitting the country and weakening the center. This will provide nourishment, I am convinced of it, for the nationalist-separatist tendencies that have already brought the country to the end of its tether, provoked an explosion of civil disobedience, and shed blood in many places in the country. Every responsible politician should call for civil concord and unification. All of a sudden, here is a call to dissociate from it and to make the center ineffective. I am deeply concerned about it and I cannot agree with it.

[Korzin] You have mentioned the word war several times. In general, the war will continue, as I understood from this speech—the war of laws which should be protecting the sovereignty!

[Antonovich] You know, any war is unpleasant and we have already seen cases when a whole range of republics started with laws of their own and ended up in bloodshed. I think in horror that if we are to continue this policy of confrontation of leaders and legislatures, then the Russian Federation's territory may not be exempt from bloodshed. We must not allow this, dear comrades.

[Korzin] Well, what about the fate of the Union treaty?

[Antonovich] In this sense Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's statements put the fate of the Union treaty in a more difficult position than before. If five republics get toegter and say that they are the Union, they can do this, but it will not be so. We have 15 republics, and now, when we are approaching a public nationwide referendum on the treaty, the responsible leaders of the republics should get together, define their attitude, and express it openly. By the way, a number of republics have made official statements that they favor the Union treaty and call on the citizens of their republics to vote for it. Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin is contradictory in his statements. He says that he favors the union treaty, that he is interested in the fate of the union and wants to strengthen it, but a confrontational position of this kind does not help this intention.

I can simply observe a discrepancy in the actual policy and the words of the leader of the Russian Supreme Soviet. But please, observe that all the hopes that the people are placing today on Boris Nikolayevich amount to the fact that two leaders, famous leaders of our country, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, who is an internationally recognized leader of the Soviet Union and the USSR president, and Boris Nikolayevich must search for points of contact. Mikhail Sergeyevich repeatedly showed his desire to search for them with specific deeds and words. Today, excuse me, yesterday Boris Nikolayevich demonstrated his unwillingness to search for points of contact. Such a destructive position is simply dangerous for the fate of the country.

As for Russia's Supreme Soviet and the USSR Supreme Soviet, they are now sitting and discussing extremely complex issues. Let me say frankly that Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's rather frivolous attitude in the interview to price increases—or to price reforms for it is all the same a price reform—proposed by Prime Minister Pavlov would prompt a protest. I have read Prime Minister Pavlov's report to the USSR Supreme Soviet. As you can see I am already a person of fairly advanced years and I have read hundreds of reports in my lifetime. For the first time I saw a well-argued, honest, and frank dialogue about how difficult things are for us and why we need to raise prices. I know—at least I read about it in the press—that the Federation Council in which Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin took part also agreed with the need to raise prices. Yet today I heard a completely different line, according to which it was as though Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin had been against it right from the start.

We are all against raising prices, both you and I, as citizens of the country, and I have no doubt that its senior leaders are too. But there is no way out and so it is not simply a price increase but a reform. It is well argued and considered, so one ought, again in the spirit of constructive cooperation, to provide assistance, to meet the other side half way and to discuss numerous issues which are acute in all republics: subsidies for poor families and others. But for this, all the same, these issues have to be discussed in commissions, among specialists and parliamentarians. Such a resolute no on television from the leader of one of the republics is, in general, counterproductive for a creative discussion; because to say no in advance without providing arguments sounds very good because we all say no to prices but when arguments are adduced we realize that they are necessary. We have to fill ourselves with a sense of civic responsibility and recognize that price reforms are inevitable. Perhaps if we had done it three years ago we would not have had a lot of the present trouble and economic disorder.

[Korzin] So, what conclusions have we drawn in our conversation?

[Antonovich] I have to draw conclusions from our conversation which are frank and may not even be very biased. I am talking about Russia. It is my pain because I work both in the RSFSR Communist Party and live in Russia. The most important thing ensuing from our discussion has to be that one must not pile onto others the blame for shortcomings in one's own work. In conditions with glasnost and where the public is paying great attention to every step taken both by Russia's Government and by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, one needs to know how to accept responsibility. Only then will we realize that social stability, civil accord, and peace cannot be ensured by confrontation, the war of laws, or mutual bickering between the leaders and the two soviets, but by hard, intense, everyday work by everybody, each citizen, each minister, each deputy in both the local and the supreme soviet, and, of course, the leaders of our country. So, I would like to end my wishes with this appeal for accord from our leaders—more concrete work from our legislative structures and resolute action from the government.

Minister on Gold Sales Remarks

LD2102020691 Moscow TASS in English 2047 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—Soviet Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Konstantin Katushev today commented on a televised statement by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, aired on Tuesday. Yeltsin said that over 200 tonnes of gold owned by Russia have been sold abroad.

The minister confirmed that the Soviet Government agreed to sell 234 tonnes of gold last year. The gold was sold for 1.638 million [figure as received] roubles, "because of the lack of sources for payments". The money was used to purchase foodstuffs abroad, which were sent to major industrial centres in Russia.

According to the existing rules, the centre's consultations with republics "are not obligatory" for such sales, the minister said.

65 Percent of Muscovites Favor Yeltsin

LD2002115891 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1100 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Summary] An opinion poll carried out among 2,650 inhabitants of Moscow on 17 February by the Moscow department of the All-Union Center for Public Opinion Study showed that 65 percent of those taking part in the poll are in favor of the activity of Boris Yeltsin in the post of chairman of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Supreme Soviet, and 15 percent against his work.

Poll Shows Public Losing Trust in Legislature

LD2002150791 Moscow World Service in English 1200 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] A public opinion poll taken in Moscow has shown that most of the voters are losing trust in the parliament of the Russian Federation. Only a third of those polled said they were satisfied with its work. The popularity of the chairman of the parliament Boris Yeltsin is also dropping. The deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation are divided into 30 different factions and groups, and more and more often they are unable to come to terms on major issues. Two hundred and seventy deputies have signed a document on convening a special session of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation, the supreme body of legislative power in the republics, in order to discuss the parliamentary crisis.

Yeltsin's Choice of Advisers Viewed

91UN0906A Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 14 Feb 91 p 1

[Article by Aleksandr Krotkov under the rubric "Political Commentary": "All the Chairman's Men"]

[Text] It would be interesting to know why the presentation of a team of B. Yeltsin's advisers—the Supreme Consultative and Coordinating Council of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Supreme Soviet Chairman—last Wednesday was virtually ignored by the big press. One gets the impression that the opponents of Boris Nikolayevich did not condescend to commenting on so "trivial" an event, whereas his supporters did not applaud enthusiastically, as if feeling that delight was uncalled for.

The first thing which leaps at you when you read the list of council members is their affiliation with the left wing of the political spectrum of our country: USSR People's Deputy Yuriy Boldyrev, academician Oleg Bogomolov, corresponding member [of the Academy of Sciences] Pavel Bunich, Director of the All-Union Center for the Study of Public Opinion Tatyana Zaslavskaya, director Mark Zakharov, writer Yuriy Karyakin, Chairman of the Moscow Soviet Gavriil Popov, Chairman of the Leningrad Soviet Anatoliy Sobchak, USSR and RSFSR People's Deputy Galina Starovoytova, General Director of the Eye Microsurgery Interbranch Scientific and Technological Combine Svyatoslav Fedorov, USSR People's Deputy Nikolay Shmelev... The list can go on, but you will not find a single centrist, to say nothing of a right-winger, on it.

If the USSR president allowed himself such lopsidedness he would immediately draw a gust of vitriolic criticism. Was it not from such criticism that his journalist admirers were trying to shield their idol when they got by with a short report on the presentation of what they themselves christened "a shadow cabinet?" I think that this was hardly the case. After all, given adequate skill, this political weakness may have been interpreted as a manifestation of strength: Supposedly, Boris Nikolayevich does not wish "to straddle the fence" but rather shows his consistent adherence to democracy.

Here is another question: Why did the need for such a demonstration become apparent at precisely this time? After all, initial information about the existence of the council in question and its composition leaked to the press as early as late December of last year. Why did they decide to legalize it more than a month later? In order to answer this question we should recall how the last month turned out for the Russian leadership and the democratic movement.

The authority of the republic government was substantially undermined by the more than dubious operation with 140 billion. Talk of its impermissibly low professional standards as one of the causes of the scandal which has broken out has not died down among left- wingers either. The chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet is himself under a cloud. Therefore, it is necessary to bolster his shaken authority. Enlisting, as they say, the "best minds of Russia" to his team was a self-evident step.

Furthermore, the latest events in the arena of domestic policy have prompted some commentators to suggest that Russia and the center were very close to agreeing on some issues. A closed-door meeting of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Soviet of the Republic discussed the issue of price policy the same day that Yeltsin presented his team of advisers to journalists. Members of the government informed the deputies about work on the draft resolution on centralized price increases "simultaneously" with central organs. It was admitted that, in the event of blocking Union measures in this sphere, losses threatening the republic are too big. One day earlier, the need to coordinate actions in the field of attracting foreign capital to the country with the center was acknowledged at the meeting of the Committee for International Affairs and Foreign Economic Relations of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, because opposition on this issue only scares overseas moneybags away.

Apparently, B. Yeltsin is beginning to understand that our fellow citizens are by now quite sick of his opposition to Gorbachev. However, his readiness to sit down at the negotiating table with the center may be viewed by some zealous populist radicals as capitulation and a betrayal of their ideas. This is why a public demonstration of the strength of their bond could not be more timely. With a view to the future, such bonds may compel the advisers of Boris Nikolayevich to share with him responsibility for possible unpopular measures in more than just his price policy, keeping the RSFSR Supreme Soviet chairman himself safe from the overly vigorous criticism by these instigators of many massive campaigns in the left press, playing, so to say, the role of Artem Tarasov with his "rumor" about the sale of the Kuril Islands.

This is where a question arises: Do they fail to understand that they may end up bound hand and foot? I believe they understand that. However, it looks as though they also have their reasons. For several months now, democrats have been complaining in a chorus about their fragmentation and weakness in the face of "advancing reaction." The calls to unite and close ranks in their wing have grown increasingly loud and persistent, and finally lead to the Democratic Congress of Independent Parties and Movements of our country which was held in Kharkov in late January. However, despite the fact that participants in the congress signed a joint declaration, they did not have any degree of serious influence on big politics. They are too few even when they unite.

The largest of the micro-parties, the "Travkin party," altogether refused to join the coalition, some believe fearing its obvious nationalist sympathies. Many of the big-name democrats who have managed to secure lofty

chairs in the structure of state management politely ignored the congress, getting away with letters of greetings to congress participants.

In a word, the issue of their unification remained open. That is to say, until the presentation of Yeltsin's "Presidential Council."

What are we to expect of this council now? The development of new, ultra-radical concepts of switching to a free market in Russia? Undoubtedly... The representation of economic science in the "shadow cabinet" is surprisingly extensive. However, there is already an overabundance of such concepts. At present, something else is in demand—scenarios of at least some compromise with the center which may help to end "the war of laws" in an armistice and proceed toward a market economy without pushing and quarreling, even if not in neat ranks. Will the adviser team be capable of pointing out this path to Yeltsin?

I know that there will be pessimists who will say: "No, they are not capable of this!" They will say that lately this crowd has only been able to condemn the center, and it is now beyond it to come to terms with the center.

I would not be that pessimistic. Life compels even intransigent opponents to turn to each other, and makes even the most unaccommodating oppositionists into flexible diplomats. The main point is for them to be moved in a timely manner from the boxes of detached observers to the stage of big politics and to grasp the profundity of their responsibility for their every step and retort.

I agree that far from all of them will grasp it, and then not right away. However, there is an opportunity—an opportunity that, faced with a general economic deluge, representatives of the most intolerant blocs, coalitions, and trends will climb on board the same political Arc.

In this sense, the unification of "all the stars" of democracy in the "shadow cabinet" is not as unpromising a step as it appears to be to their opponents at first sight.

Official Denies Kuril Islands Sale to Japan

OW1602121991 Moscow in Japanese to Japan 1200 GMT 14 Feb 91

[Text] NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA [INDEPENDENCE], a Moscow newspaper, has interviewed (Vladimir Lukin), chairman of the committee on international affairs and external economic relations attached to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR], and asked for his comments on remarks by Tarasov, a deputy in the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies. Deputy Tarasov has said that the Soviet and Japanese Governments signed a secret agreement on the sale of the Kuril Islands for $200 billion. In this connection, Mr. (Lukin) has said:

I criticize Tarasov for confusing domestic matters with foreign affairs. Analysis and prediction must be done comprehensively. Tarasov has delved into and latched onto individual fragments in a stream of facts and related items. As is known to all, a classic way of building an ideology is to piece together disparate facts so as to form a certain scheme.

Tarasov seems to feel that Japan has great interest in the current situation in the Soviet Union. The fact is, however, that Japan had such interests during the period of its high industrial growth in the 1960's and early 1970's. Japan intends to develop its relations with the Soviet Union, but for political, not economic, reasons.

In regard to the secret agreement, there is absolutely no evidence of it. A concrete figure of $200 billion has been mentioned, but this is not the first time that figures were mentioned. I have heard of such rumors many times during the past 10-15 years. This has nothing to do with Japanese political circles. The sum of $200 billion is quite large, even for an affluent nation like Japan. It is comparable to Japan's annual budget.

As far as the Soviet side is concerned, such ideas as the sale of the Kurile Islands have never been brought up. This can be clearly asserted in a positive way. Preparations for President Gorbachev's visit to Japan are progessing steadily. It has been mentioned, however, that the territories issue should be discussed first and that tenacious efforts should be made to agree that settlement should be postponed until a time when it can be resolved in a different context. In such a case, we can say that the progressive appraoch is to regard security and friendship between neighboring nations as more important than settling the territories issue.

Furthermore, Sakhalin Island, to which the Kuril Islands belong, is part of RSFSR territory. At its first plenum, the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies adopted a law which stipulates that any changes to Russian borders can only be made through a national referendum.

Regarding Tarasov's rather eccentric idea, I think it should be regarded as a mind-teaser. I do not think that such remarks should have been made at the RSFSR Supreme Soviet at this time of importance and responsibility. Such remarks will create unnecessary problems for the positive development of Soviet-Japanese relations and will diminish trust in the Soviet Union, the RSFSR, and Soviet political methods. Tarasov's idea reflects neither the views of the committee on international affairs and external economic relations of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet nor those of the RSFSR Foreign Ministry.

Legislature Says Chernobyl Problems Unresolved

LD2002212291 Moscow TASS in English 2033 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Moscow February 20 TASS—Almost five years have passed after the Chernobyl disaster, but many problems caused by the national calamity are still unresolved, the Russian parliament concluded today.

The parliament was discussing the draft state programme to clean up the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster.

Russian territories contaminated with radiation include not only the regions neighbouring Chernobyl. The situation in the over-industrialised southern Urals is no less complex.

Over 2.27 million people in Russia directly suffered from the Chernobyl disaster. Some 3,000 settlements have been contaminated, first and foremost in Bryansk and Tula regions in central Russia.

Cleaning the aftermath of the disaster has become a priority for the whole state. Billions of roubles have already been allocated to this end, but it will take at least two billion roubles more, Chairman of the Russian State Committee to Clean up the Aftermath of the Chernobyl Disaster Semen Polishchuk told TASS.

In some districts in the sourthern Urals, such as Chelyabinsk region, radioactive contamination has been critical for over 40 years. USSR people's deputy Aleksandr Penyagin told parliament that the ecological situation there is "without a world precedent."

Penyagin said that about half a million people have suffered from radiation over the 40 years, since plutomium processing began in the region. Radioactive wastes with radioactivity amounting to over a billion curies (equivalent to 20 Chernobyl disaster) have been stored on 30 square kilometers in the region, he said.

After discussing the situation, the Russian parliament decided to elaborate a number of documents, including bills concerning social protection of people, who fell victim to radiation.

Moscow Postpones Food Rationing Coupon Decision

LD1902225291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1544 GMT 19 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondent Igor Agabekov]

[Text] Moscow, 19 Feb (TASS)—At a joint meeting of the leaders of the Moscow City Executive Committee and the Moscow Oblast Executive Committee today, a decision on setting a specific date in Moscow and Moscow region for the introduction of food ration coupons was postponed again.

A decision adopted at the meeting specifically says that the date for the introduction of coupons will be set separately based on the situation in the consumer market. In other words, the proposed measure is extremely undesirable, and it will be carried out only if circumstances so dictate. Some participants in the meeting were hoping for the forthcoming price reform, which would have to lead to the stabilization of the consumer market, and that would accordingly exclude the need for the introduction of coupons.

It has been proposed to introduce a single coupon system for Moscow and Moscow Oblast. They will be of a similar circulation and take into account varied close links between the capital and the oblast.

At the meeting an agreement was also reached on the allocation of plots of land to Muscovites, who wish to take up market-gardening. By spring, every Muscovite will be able to receive a plot of land—up to three-hundredths of a hectare (a family of three to four people will receive ten- to twelve-hundredths of a hectare). The oblast will allocate plots for a year in the radius of up to 50 km from Moscow, near big roads and on arable lands, which state farms and collective farms will help to work and fertilize.

Komi Miners Threaten Strike Over Pay Stoppage

PM1902135591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 2040 GMT 16 Feb 91

[From the "Television News Service" newscast: Report by Ye. Kuznetsov from Vorkuta, Komi ASSR]

[Text] Local observers claim that the former government of Nikolay Ryzhkov must be regarded as one of the organizers of the next strike. It issued the widely known resolutions No 608 and No 1,036. Their contents make a miners' strike possible at any moment, since they contain a detailed timetable for the arrival of auspicious stages of developed socialism in this industry. The miners' main demands include a review of the general tariff agreement, which in effect would treble their pay.

Meanwhile, in the Komi ASSR [Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic] all drilling work has effectively stopped without any official strike declaration. The center has cut off funding and people have not been paid since December. However, the cabinet of Valentin Pavlov has failed so far to respond to the ultimatum demanding that all issues be resolved.

Western Republics

Moldovan President Snegur Announces Resignation

Cites Attacks by Party

LD2102140291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1225 GMT 21 Feb 91

[By TASS correspondents Valeriy Demidetskiy and Fedor Angeli]

[Text] Kishinev, 21 Feb (TASS)—At the legislative session today Moldovan President Mircha Snegur resigned. In his declaration he asked the deputies to give him an opportunity to carry on with the duties until a new republic's president is elected by means of public voting.

Mircha Snegur expressed the reasons that prompted him to take such a step. "Lately," he noted in particular, "attacks on me in the media by the Communist Party of

Moldova have grown stronger, especially after Grigoriy Yeremey became its leader. I am accused of not defending the property of the Communist Party."

In the legislature, the president believes, "a behind-the-scenes struggle" against him is carried out. "I supported the activities of the government," Mircha Snegur continued, "although it was making mistakes, in particular in export-import operations. It is very difficult to work with Prime Minister Mircha Druk. He is hot-tempered and in response to every criticism he resorts to shouting. Sometimes we cannot finish our conversation."

The speaker confirmed his adherence to the statements "on sovereignty, against dictate by the center, and against referendum." "But a president," he said, "can feel confident only when he has the support of the people. The republic is in crisis, and the legislature should share this responsibility. It is necessary to adopt a law on electing a president publicly and then to move on to the organization of elections by universal suffrage."

Says President Powerless

LD2102130391 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1230 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] At the morning meeting of parliamentary session, Mircha Snegur, president of the Republic of Moldova, said that he has recently become a target of open attacks by the local Communist Party. The president complained that the republican government is forcefully trying to preserve the post of president as a figurehead devoid of power.

Snegur demanded that the legislature adopt a law on presidential elections and announced his resignation. However, he stressed he will carry out his duties until a new president is elected by all the people.

Moldovan Leaders Advocate 'Community' of States

LD2002102291 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Report by correspondent M. Sokirke from the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] [Announcer] Moldova's legislature today discussed the issue of the concept of a community of sovereign states and of holding the USSR referendum.

[Sokirke] This question is a complicated and knotty one and has been debated by the republic's citizens for some time now.

Views have become divided and it has become absolutely clear that both among the population and in the legislature three camps have formed: Some are in favor of holding the referendum, others are against, and yet others are in favor of holding it but on the condition of a preliminary public opinion poll on 10 March.

This is the exact alignment of forces that has been confirmed by today's discussion.

The legislative session started with a report by the Soviet Socialist Republic [SSR] President Mircha Snegur on his visit to Romania, after which it was decided to announce at Deputy Gusak's proposal an interval for the discussion in clubs of the documents issued. There is no need to enumerate them but I will say only that they have a direct bearing on the issue of the further fate of the Union, the republic's participation in preparing the concept of the community of sovereign states, and of course for the referendum.

The floor was given to the republic's leaders after the interval, to Prime Minister Druk, to Supreme Soviet Chairman Moshanu, and to Moldovan Republican President Snegur. All of them categorically spoke out against the referendum and confirmed their intention to take part in the formation of the community of sovereign states. Members of the Democrats and Rural Life clubs also spoke out against the referendum.

The Sovetskaya Moldavia and Independent Deputies clubs spoke out in favor of both a preliminary public poll and of a referendum.

Only the position of Communist deputies united in the Realnost [Reality] club remains not fully understood. After the discussion of procedural questions it was decided that it was up to everyone to express his attitude to the referendum in open roll-call voting. By a majority of votes the deputies rejected the center's decision to hold an all-Union referendum but voted in favor of the formation of a community of sovereign states.

Belorussian Ministry Cuts Political Departments

LD1202120591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 0900 GMT 12 Feb 91

[From the "Television News Service" program]

[Text] The Belorussian minister of internal affairs has issued a decree on the abolition of political departments at the republic's Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Military Observer on Forming Ukrainian Army

LD1902204391 Kiev International Service in English 0000 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] [Announcer] A conference called "External and Home Security of Ukraine—the Concept of Ukrainian Armed Forces," was held in Kiev these days. Its initiators were People's Movement of the Ukraine, known as Rukh, the Association of Democratic Councils, People's Council of Ukraine, and some other organizations. The aim of the conference was to attract the attention of the public to creating Ukrainian national armed forces. Most people would have thought that the idea of such forces had already matured. I asked our military observer, Gennadiy Anatolenko, to comment on this.

[Anatolenko] Perhaps theoretically this idea has matured, but practically the state of affairs is not as simple. Representatives of Rukh and other organizations do realize this. First of all, I'd like to speak about political aspects of the problem. The latest events in the world testify to the fact that the situation in the world does not give reasons to disband the armed forces. I think that war in the Gulf needs no comment.

Then we must take into consideration economic aspects of the problem. Ukraine will have to bear all the military expenditures, while it needs money for the development of the economy. And there is another aspect. The situation in this country is very unstable now. And the army is the only mechanism which is maybe a consolidating element. Our opponents also realize this.

[Announcer] And what do you think were the main questions discussed at the conference?

[Anatolenko] Well, the main thing to my mind was the censure of anti-army complaints. Many of the speakers said that we couldn't follow the example of the Baltic republics, that is, create some parallel structures.

[Announcer] Do you mean that in the Ukraine this process will be like an evolution?

[Anatolenko] Well, yes, this process will be an evolution, a kind if Ukrainification of the army, step by step. There were announced that two levels of security will be created—interior and external.

[Announcer] So in principle, parallel structures are possible, aren't they?

[Anatolenko] Sure. It means that we shall have our inner structure, say a national guard, and ex-territorial structure with nuclear weapons [as heard]. People of Ukrainian nationality will form the Ukrainian Army. Official language will be Ukrainian. Russian will be the language of international, ex-territorial armed forces.

[Announcer] Depolitization of the army. Was this problem discussed, and do you agree such a point of view?

[Anatolenko] Well, there is no depolitized army in the world. In fact, such a point of view is a substitution of notions [as heard]. If we speak about depolitization, then this process is quite normal or natural in the conditions of a multiparty system. But only naive people or political swindlers may speak about depolitization. Let's take the war in the Gulf. All sides have their political aims.

[Announcer] Do you support the idea of a Ukrainian national army?

[Anatolenko] Well, I think that our concepts about the army as well must proceed not from our wishes, but from the real situation in this country and abroad, and the situation is such that speaking about a national army is nonsense. Besides, we can't speak about our national army, because we don't have the necessary basis for this. Those who speak about a national army don't understand all the problems they will face. We may only have national interior forces, like for instance the National Guard in the United States.

[Announcer] This was an opinion of our military observer, Gennadiy Anatolenko, about the possible creating of Ukrainian national armed forces. I would like to remind him that national armed forces are a sign of a sovereign state.

Rukh Calls for Commemorating Nazi Atrocity

LD1402210691 Moscow TASS in English 1845 GMT 14 Feb 91

[By UKRINFORM-TASS correspondent Stanislav Volnyanskiy]

[Text] Kiev February 14 TASS—The social and political popular Ukrainian movement (Rukh) has released a statement here to demand that all those who contributed to the Baby Yar tragedy in Kiev in September 1941 be tried, despite the expiry of the limitation period.

Baby Yar is the place where Nazis killed more than 100,000 Soviet civilians in a mass extermination campaign, mainly spearheaded against Jews. It became emblematic of the suffering the Jewish people had to go through, an apogee of the genocide Nazis carried out across Europe, the statement stressed.

Rukh appealed to the Ukrainian parliament with a proposal to proclaim September 29—the first day of the extermination campaign in Baby Yar—remembrance day commemorating victims of the Nazi genocide. It also asked the Ukrainian Government to work out measures to commemorate all those who died in mass repressions all over the Ukraine.

The statement proposes holding in Kiev in September 1991 a forum of peoples inhabiting the Ukraine to consider the human rights situation in the republic for all people regardless of nationality.

"We call on all individuals, public and political organisations and state offices to pay special attention to problems of inter-ethnic relations in the Ukraine and work persistently to create conditions facilitating the development of each ethnic group living on the Ukrainian soil," the statement says.

Caucasus

Georgian Communist Party Leaders Resign

PM2102153191 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 20 Feb 91 p 1

[Item in a roundup of KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA's "own information" and POSTFAKTUM reports under the general heading: "Have You Heard? Have You Read?"]

[Text] A. Margiani, first secretary of the Georgian Communist Party Central Committee, and G. Patsatsiya, secretary of the Central Committee, have resigned, attributing their decision to the complete discrediting of the Communist Party.

Margiani Rejects Claims of CPSU Help

LD1402201591 Moscow Central Television Vostok Program and Orbita Networks in Russian 1530 GMT 14 Feb 91

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] Avtandil Margiani, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party, has stated at a news conference that the present course of the republican party organization is independent from the CPSU Central Committee. In connection with this, he rejected a number of reports about monetary assistance to the Communist Party of Georgia from the center. At the same time, Margiani admitted a deterioration in the financial position of the Communist Party of Georgia. Last year, he said, 37,000 people left the party, while 12,000 people joined it. As a result, revenues from party fees were reduced.

Margiani Backs Republic Autonomy

PM1502170791 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 15 Feb 91 Second Edition p 3

[TASS report: "Not Through Numbers, But Through Commerce"]

[Text] Tbilisi, 14 Feb—"Georgia's communists advocate complete state autonomy for the republic," A. Margiani, first secretary of the Georgian Communist Party Central Committee, said at a news conference.

He told journalists that the republic party organization's present course is independent of the CPSU Central Committee and in this connection denied a number of articles about monetary aid to the Georgian Communist Party from the center. At the same time A. Margiani acknowledged the deterioration in the Communist Party's financial position. Last year, according to him, 37,000 people left and 12,000 joined the party. As a result revenue from party dues has dropped. However, the Georgian Communist Party intends to set things to rights by expanding commercial activity. In particular, Tbilisi's House of Political Enlightenment has been leased for 1 million rubles [R] and a transport agency has been set up in the Adzhar ASSR [Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic].

The value of Georgian Communist Party property currently exceeds R50 million and, as its first secretary said, some—in the form of buildings and structures—may be transferred to the republic's Council of Ministers.

Georgia Cracks Down on Illegally Armed Groups

AU2002214691 Tbilisi Domestic Service in Georgian 0500 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Communique issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Georgia; date not given]

[Text] Yesterday, 19 February, organs of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs carried out an operation in which they confiscated weapons from illegally armed units and arrested individuals who were illegally in possession of weapons.

In Tbilisi, Dzaba Ioseliani, the leader of the illegally armed Georgian group Mkhedrioni [words indistinct] was arrested and a Makarov pistol and [word indistinct] bullets were confiscated from him. Yesterday, the Mkhedrioni's deputy leader was likewise arrested and a Makarov pistol, some [words indistinct] bullets and 42,000 rubles were confiscated from him..

In Gurdzhaani, workers from the department of internal affairs arrested the leader of the Gurdzaani Mkhedrioni organization [words indistinct] and members of the organization [passage indistinct].

In Telavi, in the village of [word indistinct] the following members of the Kvareli Mkhedrioni organization were arrested [names indistinct].

Members of the Akhmeta Mkhedrioni organization were arrested [names indistinct]. Of the 15 persons arrested all but two are unemployed. During the arrest, [the militia] confiscated 2 Makarov pistols, and a [word indistinct] pistol that the Mkhedrioni members seized following an attack on the Telavi department of internal affairs on 14 October 1990. They also confiscated a Kalashnikov assault rifle which had been taken from a worker of the Telavi department of internal affairs while on duty. A hunting rifle, [words indistinct] and armor-piercing bullets were also confiscated from those arrested.

Mkhedrioni members were arrested in Samtredia.

Why has it been necessary to take such radical measures against the Mkhedrioni? The whole of our society has clearly seen that the sociopolitical situation in the republic has been getting more tense since last autumn as a result of the illegally armed groups. Mkhedrioni members have carried out attacks on departments of internal affairs in Kvareli, Gurdzhaani, Telavi, and Lagodekhi; they have seized firearms and committed other acts of violence. [passage indistinct]

Up to now, Georgian law enforcement organs have not taken decisive measures against the Mkhedrioni as it was hoped that they would finally recognize the responsibility they bear for their own actions, would themselves stop the actions directed against their own people, and would voluntarily surrender their weapons to the national militia. It was proposed that a warning (? be issued to them) from the [Georgian] Supreme Soviet and

from the Ministry of Internal Affairs [words indistinct] has not been heeded. On the contrary, the actions of the Mkhedrioni have assumed an even more provocative character. During the last few days, prefects [newly appointed local government representatives] have been attacked and firearms were used against the peaceful population in Samtredia. In addition, weapons, [words indistinct] military equipment have been seized from military units [words indistinct] it is natural that the military [word indistinct] and all imperial forces standing behind them will use (?force) in response to this provocation.

The action taken by the military on the night of 18 February on Shavnabada [hill on outskirts of Tbilisi] is clear proof of this. [passage indistinct] All the [word indistinct] forces that, through their own provocative actions, are contributing to the implementation of imperialist designs against us have to be stopped in order to remove any possible danger to Georgia and to our people. It is precisely for this reason that Mkhedrioni leaders were arrested by organs of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs. [passage indistinct]

We know that in the [Mkhedrioni] organization [words indistinct] there are many honest young people. They are badly needed by the nation and by the future Georgian [word indistinct]. We firmly believe that they will make the right choice and take the [word indistinct] necessary step. The Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs gives a full guarantee of immunity to the individual members not only of the Mkhedrioni but also of all illegal armed formations provided they voluntarily surrender their weapons. At the same time, [words indistinct] we are ready to accept those who really love their country into the ranks of the Georgian militia or National Guard. Finally, we would like to believe that Georgian society will assess in the proper way not only the acts of the Mkhedrioni but also the measures taken against them. [passage indistinct]

[Signed] The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Georgia

Georgia Protests Army Actions

AU2002180191 Tbilisi Domestic Service in Georgian 0500 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Message from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Georgia to USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev and USSR Defense Minister Dmitriy Yazov; place and date not given]

[Text] At dawn on 18 February 1991, on the outskirts of Tbilisi, at Shavnabada [name of hill], a confrontation took place between members of a group of illegally armed Mkhedrioni and members of a subunit of the Soviet Army. As a result, the military captured [words indistinct]. There were people wounded on both sides. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Georgia protests against the action taken by units of the Soviet Army. [Words indistinct] rights of a sovereign republic.

Georgia Appeals to Armed Groups

AU2002175991 Tbilisi Domestic Service in Georgian 0500 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Address by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Georgia to members of the Mkhedrioni illegally armed Georgian groups; place and date not given]

[Text] Fellow countrymen, Georgians, in these difficult times for our country, we appeal to you with the following request.

We have no doubt that many of you truly want [words indistinct] for your own country. Therefore, we ask you once again to carefully think about your actions and not to become, through lack of thought, blind weapons in the hands of the enemies of Georgia.

Any kind of provocative action taken against the occupational forces could be used as a reason to bring additional Army units into our country and to deliver bloody retribution against the Georgian people [words indistinct].

Georgians Caught Transporting Arms

PM2102105791 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 15 Feb 91 First Edition p 3

[Report by correspondent Lieutenant Colonel A. Semenyaka: "Helicopter Held"]

[Text] Tskhinvali—A civil helicopter from Tbilisi was detained on the afternoon of 12 February in the state of emergency area for violating flight regulations. The Mi-8 entered the local airfield's region of responsibility without providing any notification by radio. Earlier the same helicopter crew had landed and taken off from the airfield without the flight controller's permission.

During the period when the airspace violator was being held, civil aviation leaders repeatedly ordered the crew not to submit to legitimate demands and not to land. At the same time, a civil aviation leader attempted to prove that the crew had permission to fly in the state of emergency area. But when the official papers were examined on the ground it transpired that the crew had diverged from their planned flight and had not entered either passengers or freight on their flight sheet.

It is not hard to guess when the civil pilots committed these violations or why their leaders insisted on continuing the flight. During the inspection servicemen discovered carbines, hunting rifles, pistols, ammunition, an F-1 grenade, lengths of safety fuse, and two packs of explosives in the cabin and confiscated them.

The investigative services arrested seven Georgian passengers. These included two students from the Tbilisi Agricultural Institute. They were dressed in warm, military-style clothing and mountain boots.

There were also leaflets in the helicopter cabin. In them Militia Major General G. Kvantaliani, commandant of Tskhinvali, claims that shooting has stopped in the conflict area and calls on citizens to speed up the handover of weapons. The commandant's words do not seem to square with reality, as they say. Yesterday evening automatic and machine-gun fire was repeatedly heard coming from the Georgian village of Tamarasheni. And I do not think that the airline passengers traveling there with weapons on board were on a tourist trip.

Criminal proceedings have been started in the case and an investigation is under way.

Georgia Imposes Blockade on Tskhinvali

LD2002195391 Moscow TASS in English 1920 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Vladikavkaz February 20 TASS—The last 24 hours were relatively quiet in Tskhinvali and its environs, but the situation remains high-strung in Southern Ossetia as a whole.

The capital of South Ossetia is suffering from the blockade thrown around it by Georgia, cutting off supplies of electricity, fuel, water and food.

A small stock of essentials has just been created after some truck convoys with food and fuel, guarded by reinforced Army escorts, made their way into the city, TASS was told at the emergency committee's press centre.

The situation in the region has been further complicated by copious snowfalls and avalanches. According to specialists, the intensity of precipitation along the Transcaucasian motor road is the highest in decades. Snow lies twenty meters deep on some parts of the road and is compressed into a seven-to-ten meters-deep cover beyond the southern portal. More avalanches are being expected. Road services are working around the clock to remove the snow and make passageways. North Ossetia is taking steps to ensure the delivery of goods to South Ossetia by helicopters.

A high-voltage electricity line pylon was damaged, cutting off electricity supplies from North Ossetia to the Java district. Electricity supplies to the mining settlement of Kvaisa have also been cut. At least ten days are required to repair the line.

Intensive skirmishes occurred last night around the village of Avievi, inhabited by Ossetians and Georgians. No casualties have been reported. A bypass between Tskhinvali and Java is blockaded causing additional difficulties for truck convoys carrying food and other essentials.

As the state of emergency has been lifted in the Java district, Interior Ministry troops are being withdrawn from the district. The Georgian parliament vested the task of maintaining law and order there on Georgian militia units. Nothing is known about the situation in out-of-the way Ossetian villages.

The leadership of North Ossetia continue to take measures to accommodate refugees from South Ossetia.

Sporadic Gunfire Reported in Tskhinvali

AU2102091691 Tbilisi Domestic Service in Russian 1530 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] It was relatively quiet in Tskhinvali and in the surrounding villages on 19 February. On 20 February, by 0100 GMT, the extremists opened fire with submachine guns and machine guns on a station of the Georgian Motor Licencing and Inspection Department and on the militia headquarters near Tskhinvali. The shooting continued for about a half-hour. Nobody was wounded and there were no casualties.

On 17 February, the extremists fired rockets from the direction of Tskhinvali on the village of (?Shveri). According to the evidence that was checked, the houses of [indistinct names of villagers] were damaged.

On 20 February, at noon, the extremists attacked Georgian militiamen in the village of [name indistinct]. When the Ministry of Interior troops intervened, the shooting stopped. Nobody was wounded and no casualties were reported.

Conflict in South Ossetia Spreads

LD2102131791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1149 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Moscow 21 Feb (TASS)—Judging by the information from South Ossetia, the area of conflict has recently crossed the boundaries of Tskhinvali, a town in which the regime of a state of emergency has been established. Armed assaults on subunits of USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs [MVD] internal troops and workers of the Georgian militia by individuals of both Ossetian and Georgian nationalities are exacerbating the situation.

The TASS correspondent was told at the USSR MVD press center that on 20 February near the village of Khetagurovo, a group of USSR MVD servicemen were the target of automatic gunfire. The subunit was heading for the village to check a report on a shoot-out there. The servicemen detained three individuals of Georgian nationality and confiscated a revolver and a sawed-off carbine with 15 cartridges. In addition, 8 sporting guns and 113 accompanying cartridges were found. Documents pertaining to this incident have been referred to the Georgian procuracy.

The same day, USSR MVD internal troops dispersed an armed group on the border of Dzhavskiy Rayon. A machine gun, two carbines, four sporting guns, 20 kg of explosives and cartridges were found on the site.

The same evening, a Georgian Militia Motor Vehicle Inspectorate post situated outside Tskhinvali was the target of automatic gunfire. There are no casualties.

SAKINFORM correspondent T. Grigalashvili reports from Tbilisi that the situation has exacerbated in Sachkherskiy Rayon, adjacent to Tskhinvali. A group of armed extremists attacked the village of Sinaguri there and cattle were stolen. Women and children have been evacuated from the village.

Troops Withdraw From Ossetian District

LD1902115291 Moscow TASS in English 1137 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Moscow February 19 TASS—All industrial enterprises, except the bakery, stood idle on Monday due to a lack of electricity and raw materials in South Ossetia, TASS learnt at the Soviet Interior Ministry press center.

Unidentified people fired on the barracks of Interior Ministry troops during the night. There were no casualties. Investigation is under way. Five people were detained for curfew violations.

All-Union Interior Ministry troops were withdrawn from the village of Dzhava, since the state of emergency was lifted in the Dzhava district. They were dispatched to the place of their permanent deployment.

Military Assistance in Ossetia Reported

PM1502150991 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 14 Feb 91 First Edition p 3

[Report by Lieutenant Colonel A. Semenyaka: "What Are Servicemen Accused Of?"]

[Text] Tskhinvali—Not a day passes without voices being heard in Tbilisi about how servicemen are on the rampage in the emergency situation region and adjacent territory and about how together with Ossetian thugs they are terrorizing the Georgian population. Is that the case? At night servicemen in armored personnel carriers do indeed carry out patrols. But there is nothing illegal in that. There are cases when military equipment is taken beyond the emergency situation regions during the daytime. But as a rule that is done in the interests of detecting crimes. Staffers of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs operational investigation group cannot do without the military's assistance. First, there is a lot of snow in the mountains and second it is simply not safe for the staffers of the investigation group.

In recent days in Ziaurskiy Rayon an accumulation of unidentified armed men has been observed and three armored reconnaissance vehicles whose ownership has not been established have appeared on Okota village. The republican mass media prefer to keep quiet about that. Nor indeed have they reported that Georgian militiamen stopped a vehicle carrying Ossetian men, women, and children. During the search the men were severely beaten.

I talked with one of the victims, Albert Kaznev, at the oblast hospital. He said that he knew nothing of the fate of the women and children who were in the bus since he and the other men were taken into a building one by one and beaten repeatedly. Then they were released with the warning that they should go back the way they came.

The casualties included 17-year-old Arkadiy Dudoyev, who died, the forensic medical study noted, from fractures to the crown and base of the skull.

Unidentified people blew up a water pipeline several kilometers from the village of Kurta, the only one carrying drinking water by gravity to Tskhinvali. As I am writing these lines the military are making attempts to eliminate the damage.

The military needed less than four days to resume movement along the Tskhinvali-Dzhava road. The barriers have been removed but the roundabout road is being picketed by inhabitants of Georgian settlements who are not letting through transport carrying food, medical supplies, and other freight sent here from North Ossetia. They motivate their actions by the fact that there could be weapons and ammunition in the sacks of flour and boxes of food and medical supplies. The flour had to be sent by helicopter. The first loaves of bread from this flour have already been baked at the local bread combine, which has started work again with the aid of the military. Two field bakeries at which military bakers are working are also baking bread for the local population.

Final-year classes have been resumed at the city school. Before this the only place they had not stopped was in the military club of the local garrison where the children of both servicemen and the local population studied. Hot food, movie shows, and television viewing have been organized for pupils here.

These are just a few facts from one day in the life of the emergency situation region and adjacent territory. I think it is hard for journalists from Tbilisi to judge the true state of affairs in South Ossetia since it is a long time since they were in this region.

Minister Charges Ossetia Coverage Biased

LD1902141591 Moscow World Service in English 1200 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Excerpt] The Georgian foreign minister, Grigoriy Khoshtaria, believes that the media in the Soviet Union and abroad give a one-sided coverage of the developments in South Ossetia. He spoke at a news conference at the Georgian mission in Moscow.

He said the press is trying to demonstrate the atrocities of the Georgians while Georgians are attacked by Ossetian militants. Khoshtaria and other participants in the news conference made it clear that the restoration of South Ossetia autonomy was out of the question. [passage omitted]

New Food Distribution System in Tbilisi

LD1802210191 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Feb 91

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] Trade in food by using ration cards is being abolished in the Georgian capital. Beginning 1 March, food sales will be carried out in distribution shops where residents of adjacent streets are registered. This solution, in the opinion of the initiators of the innovation, should regulate the distribution of food, which is in short supply for Tbilisi citizens. However, the fact that the right to obtain food will now be accorded by a residence registration stamp in one's passport has given rise to serious concern among visitors to the city, people on official trips, and servicemen.

NKAO Sends Appeal to Gorbachev

LD2002150291 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1400 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Unidentified TASS correspondent reports from Stepanakert]

[Text] A 1,000-strong meeting took place in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast [NKAO] oblast center and meetings also took place in four rayon centers, where the majority of inhabitants are Armenians. The meetings' participants sent telegrams to the country's president, to the USSR Supreme Soviet session, and to other high bodies of power. They contain the same demand as before—to restore the oblast soviet of people's deputies, withdraw the republican organizing committee on NKAO from the oblast, as well as the Special Purpose Militia Unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan, and to cancel the decision of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet on abolishing Shaumaynovskiy Rayon, the majority of the inhabitants of which are Armenians.

Azerbaijan Flag Rehoisted at NKAO Building

NC1902203891 Yerevan Domestic Service in Armenian 1730 GMT 18 Feb 91

[Report from the press center of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and ARMENPRES]

[Text] As we have already reported, a week ago the Azerbaijan legislature adopted the national flag as its state flag and, the next morning it was hoisted on Nagorno-Karabakh's oblast party committee building in the central square of Stepanakert. For the past year, this building has been forcibly occupied by the Republican Organizational Committee and the office of the military commandant.

However, after an hour the troops took the flag down arguing that only the Soviet state flag could fly over the building housing the office of the military commandant. Then, in the evening of 15 February the Azerbaijani state flag was once more hoisted on the building. This time, the troops reacted differently to this provocative move by the Organizational Committee. They were merely satisfied with hoisting the Soviet state flag alongside the Azerbaijani one.

It is significant that the chief of the political department at the office of the military commandant was invited to Baku a few days ago, where he met the Azerbaijani leadership. It is assumed that the tolerance shown by the military authorities was connected with this visit.

However, the troops and most of the officers are displeased at the presence of Azerbaijani flag on the building housing the office of the commandant and are not hiding their dissatisfaction. Other sources report that they have already sent a protest cable to Moscow notifying the military's refusal to work under that flag.

Kirov Rayon First Secretary Replaced

NC0802002191 Baku Domestic Service in Azeri 1700 GMT 6 Feb 91

[Text] The Kirov Rayon Party Committee [raykom] has held a plenum to examine organizational matters. In view of his appointment to another post, Aliyev was relieved of his duties as first secretary of Kirov Raykom. In a secret ballot, Akhmedov, chairman of the Kirov Rayon people's deputies soviet executive committee, was elected first secretary of the raykom.

R. Agayev, member of the Azerbaijan Communist Party Central Committee Bureau and first secretary of the Baku City Party Committee, participated in the work of the plenum.

Armenian Legislature Discussions Reported

NC1602180591 Yerevan ARMENPRES International Service in Armenian 1215 GMT 14 Feb 91

[Text] Yerevan, 14 Feb (ARMENPRES)—A number of issues of state importance were discussed and important documents were adopted at the full sessions of the Armenian Republic's Supreme Soviet held 11-13 February, among them the decision on the election of the members of the Armenian Republic's Supreme Court. Thirty-two members of the Supreme Court were elected for the period up to the adoption of the [new] constitution (Basic Law) of the Armenian Republic.

The Supreme Soviet also debated the bill on public and political organizations. The point stipulating the depoliticization of the armed forces, state security, procuracy, arbitration, and Internal Affairs Ministry organs was again put to a vote and adopted.

Differences emerged among the people's deputies over the point stipulating that no public or political organization whose leadership is based outside Armenia can be set up or operate in the Armenian Republic. After

prolonged debate the Supreme Soviet adopted the version prepared by the relevant commission which bans organizations whose leadership is based outside the territory of Armenia.

The Supreme Soviet sessions also heard reports from Internal Affairs Minister Gazaryan and Trade Minister Davityan on the functions of their departments.

The deputies considered the reports and the replies of the ministers as self-exculpatory and self-aggrandizing, even though the state of affairs in these departments is far from desirable.

Central Asia

Treaty Between Kazakhstan, Ukraine Concluded

LD2002171891 Moscow Central Television Vostok Program and Orbita Networks in Russian 1530 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Report by G. Baimbetov in Alma-Ata; from the "Vremya" newscast]

[Exceprt] [Announcer] A bilateral treaty was concluded in Alma-Ata today between Kazakhstan and the Ukraine.

[Baimbetov] This most important document, in which interstate relations between two sovereign republics are precisely defined, was signed by President of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic [SSR] Nazarbayev and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR Kravchuk.

First, the treaty provides for a mutual recognition of the sovereignty of the republics, respect for their territorial integrity, and equal rights for all people irrespective of their nationality, religion or other differences.

As enshrined in the treaty, a most-favored treatment regime in resolving all economic questions will be created. There are paragraphs in which both sides intend to coordinate their efforts to eliminate the aftermath of the Chernobyl tragedy and of the ecological disasters of Aral and the Semipalatinsk testing range. It was stressed that such agreements will become a real basis for drawing up the new union treaty.

A news conference was held after the signing. [passage omitted]

Tajik Supreme Soviet Convenes 20 Feb

LD2002233891 Dushanbe Domestic Service in Tajik 1600 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] The fifth session of the republican Supreme Soviet of the 12th convocation began its work on 20 February The session was opened by Aslonov, chairman of the republican Supreme Soviet, and Makhamov, the president of Tajikistan, attended the session.

During the first day of its work, the session approved its work agenda. The session then began examining relevant issue: the all-union referendum in the republic and discussion on the draft law of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic [SSR] on [word indistinct] nationalization and privatization of ownership in the Takij SSR. A statement by Makhkamov, president of the Republic, and a report by Dzhumatov, deputy chairman of the Tajik SSR Supreme Soviet Committee on economic reform, we heard the issues. Deputies had an active participation in discussing these issues.

Tajik President Abolishes Two Ministries

LD1502130791 Dushanbe Domestic Service in Russian 1400 GMT 14 Feb 91

[Text] Comrade Makhkamov, president of the Tajik SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] today signed decrees on the abolishment of the Ministry of Light Industry of the Tajik SSR in connection with the establishment of the State Industrial and Trade Concern for the Tajik SSR light industry, and on the abolishment of the Ministry of the Petroleum Industry of the Tajik SSR, in connection with the establishment of the State Industrial Concern, called Tajik NeftProm [Tajik Petroleum Industry]

Tajik Party Calls For 'Strengthening' of Union

PM2102102991 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 19 Feb 91 First Edition p 2

["Official report" by L. Makhkamov: "Plenum Held"]

[Text] The republic party organization's current tasks were examined by a Tajik Communist Party Central Committee plenum on 18 February in Dushanbe. Keynote speaker K. Makhkamov, member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo, first secretary of the republic Communist Party Central Comittee, and president of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic [SSR], and the contributors to the debate noted that some party committees, using the separation of party and soviet functions as an excuse, have sharply reduced their impact on efforts to stabilize the socioeconomic situation in the localities, which was already at crisis point. The plenum urged the republic's communists to step up their political activeness.

Only in a renewed union of sovereign republics can the Tajik SSR fully reveal its economic, social, and intellectual potential, it was noted at the plenum. During the preparations for the nationwide referendum in March, communists must explain to the republic's population why it is necessary to advocate not only the preservation, but also the strengthening of the USSR. The plenum adopted an appeal to the republic's working people and inhabitants on the matter.

Agenda Given for Uzbek Supreme Soviet Session

LD1402223991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1128 GMT 14 Feb 91

[By TASS corresondent Vladimir Pruger]

[Text] Tashkent, 14 February (TASS)—The participants in the republics's extraordinary Supreme Soviet session that started today will adopt a package of laws paving the way for Uzbekistan to make a phased transition to the market economy. In addition, the people's deputies will set measures for the population's social protection in the conditions of a market economy and form the budget for 1991, which will make it possible for the economy to function properly.

It is planned to raise the minimum wage from 85 rubles [R] to R100 per month and introduce a monthly benefit for children up to 17 years of age. It is intended to raise prices in the republic only when means of compensation have been found.

The discussion of draft laws on taxes from enterprises, on associations and organizations, on enterprises in Uzbekistan, on land tax, and on banks and banking promises to be difficult. The government proposes not increasing the tax on enterprises' profit by more than 38 percent.

Also included in the agenda of the session are issues of introducing additions and amendments to the republic's Constitution, and increasing criminal liability for hijacking means of transport.

On the first day of the work of the session, the participants adopted two appeals to the USSR Supreme Soviet and President Mikhail Gorbachev. One of these expressed concern at the tragic events in Lithuania and Latvia, and contains a call for civic peace and calm, and a sensible settlement of the crisis situation. The second appeal expresses support for the USSR president's initiatives, expounded in his declaration of the 9 February, on the cessation of escalation of military actions in the Persian Gulf.

Further on Agenda

PM2002113191 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 15 Feb 91 Union Edition p 2

["Direct Line" report by Andrey Orlov: "Extraordinary Session of Uzbek Parliament"]

[Text] An extraordinary session of the Uzbek SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] Supreme Soviet opened 14 February.

The urgency was due to the need to form a budget for Uzbekistan and to adopt a number of laws making it possible to take steps on the path toward market relations and providing for measures on the social protection of the population. The documents include republican draft laws on banks and banking, on enterprises, on entrepreneurial activity, on taxes on enterprises, associations, and organizations, on a land tax, and also on income tax. The deputies will also consider a draft law "On Public Associations in the Uzbek SSR."

Immediately after the opening of the extraordinary session another item was added to the agenda: preparation and presentation to the deputies of a draft law "On the Protection of the Honor and Dignity of the President, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, and the Vice President of the Uzbek SSR."

Uzbekistan Passes Law on Enterprises, Hijacking

LD1502232691 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1900 GMT 15 Feb 91

[Text] A number of important legal acts designed to stabilize the republic's economy were adopted today at the final session of the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic [SSR]. A law on entrepreneurship had its second reading, while a law on enterprises was passed and a bill on stepping up criminal liability for the hijacking of transport was approved.

Parliamentary commissions have been charged with drawing up proposals for a new state flag, emblem, and anthem for the Uzbek SSR.